Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-055
Wednesday
20 March 1996

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-055 *20 March 1996*

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Salamah, 2 Other Fugitives Elude Palestinian Security by 'Only a Few Minutes'

TA2003110896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives responsible for suicide attacks in Israel have managed to elude the Palestinian security forces in Ramallah. The three escaped yesterday from an apartment in downtown Ramallah shortly before the Palestinian security forces raided the place. Our correspondent Hanan Schlein reports.

[Begin Schlein recording] The Palestinian security forces are closing in on three Hamas fugitives: Muhi-al-Din al-Sharif, Hasan Salamah, and 'Adil 'Awadallah. The three are responsible for the recent series of suicide attacks in Israel. A Palestinian security source assessed today that the three will be apprehended in the near future.

The Palestinian security forces recently received clear information regarding the presence of the three in Ramallah, contrary to earlier reports on their whereabouts. At noon yesterday, the security forces raided their safe house in downtown Ramallah. Muhyi-al-Din al-Sharif and his two colleagues fled the site shortly before the forces arrived, and the only thing left to be done was to detain the owner of the apartment. The fact that they missed the three by only a few minutes strengthens the assessment of Palestinian intelligence sources that the three will be apprehended within a relatively short period of time. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Weapons, Ammunition Seized in Khan Yunus

JN1903202896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian General Intelligence Service captured weapons hidden in a secret cache in Khan Yunus. A General Intelligence Service source indicated that after being tipped off about the cache, security personnel stormed the cache and seized its contents, which included TNT explosives, machine guns, handguns, computers, leaflets, and video cassettes. [video shows above seized items with bullets, knives, hatchets, cameras, and binoculars on display]

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinians Tie Jerusalem Report to Election Campaign

TA2003100096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Israel and the Palestinians can arrive at an agreement on Jerusalem by temporarily putting aside the question of sovereignty over the city, Prof. Ruth Lapidot, one of the authors of the controversial Foreign Ministry-commissioned report on Jerusalem, reaffirmed yesterday. [passage omitted]

The PA [Palestinian Authority] is "open to any idea" on coming to an agreement on Jerusalem, as long as it is understood its basic demand is eastern Jerusalem be the capital of a future Palestinian state, Hasan 'Asfur, head of the PA Negotiations Department, said yesterday.

'Asfur said the study on Jerusalem never reached his office, which coordinates talks with Israel for the PA, and he only learned of it through media reports over the past two days.

"Negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem must be conducted on the basis of the Palestinian demand for east Jerusalem, as our capital," 'Asfur stated. "Those negotiations are not scheduled to begin until May, and until then it is a shame to try and conduct talks through the media."

"The whole issue of Jerusalem has now become a major theme of the Israeli election, of the fight between the Labor and Likud parties. This is not good. It only sparks incorrect rumors and charges," 'Asfur said.

Khalil Tufakji, a leading Palestinian figure in Jerusalem involved in the academic talks on the city's future, also characterized the reports on the study as being politically motivated.

"There is nothing new I can see (in the Jerusalem Institute report,)" Tufakji said. "There are 600 scenarios about Jerusalem's future, this institute has its maps, another has its maps. I don't see anything new in it."

"(Jerusalem Mayor Ehud) Olmert is trying to use Jerusalem to win the election for the Likud, by making all kinds of accusations about the government's plans (in Jerusalem,)" he said.

Lapidot, who served as the Foreign Ministry's legal advisor about 15 years ago, also said the report's significance had been blown out of proportion, apparently by politicians who were trying to use it as political fodder in the election campaign.

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Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Sees Current 'Crisis' as Israeli Electioneering

MM1903141596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Fatah: Sharm al-Shaykh Summit Dealt With Crisis' Aftereffects Instead of Causes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Fatah, the major PLO group, has said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's approach was to deal with the current crisis' aftereffects instead of the causes, embodied in the continuation of the occupation, despite the clear and unambiguous Palestinian position expressed in President Yasir 'Arafat's speech.

In its main fortnightly bulletin published by the Ideological Mobilization Department in Tunis, Fatah said that it is now obvious that the current crisis as a whole has become an electoral card for Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton, and that it has now become clear that the new Middle East order that Israel is trying to achieve is an extension of the new world order that the United States is striving for.

Fatah added that this requires everything around Israel to be changed and renewed, in order to fit in with its strategic aspirations for hegemony and domination over the Middle East without any change to the ethnic supremacy bias and the tale of God's chosen people, which is deep-seated in the Zionist entity's leaders. Fatah said that the current crisis has revealed the truth behind the Zionist understanding of the agreements ratified between the PLO and the Israeli Government, and that the colored maps and the urban divisions of the "A," "B," and "C" areas have started to materialize, and that the liberated cities in area "A" have become merely small islands scattered in the vast sea of occupation in the "C" areas, with intensified persecution against the cities, villages, and camps in area "B."

In its bulletin published under the supervision of Fatah Central Committee member Sakhr Habash (Abu-Nizar), Fatah said that what is happening on the ground is a clear indication of a move toward imposing limited self-rule on Palestinian communities living within the "Greater Israel borders" as a final solution through which Israel can guarantee its security and impose a peace of submission on the Palestinian people.

Fatah accused Israel of reverting, through its daily actions and the Israeli attempts to outdo one another in the election market, to a militaristic approach aimed at imposing control. To that effect, it cited Peres' vehement remarks and their similarity to the Likud's exaggerations and Israeli President Ezer Weizman's statements and boasts, which it described as "stupid," saying that these statements amounted to urging that if "we cannot find a needle in the haystack, then the haystack must be burned." Fatah described this call as a clear Nazi call to burn the Palestinian people under the pretext of searching for the suicide bombers.

Fatah said that Weizman was not aware that such a call would turn the haystack into a mountain of needles which would defy all forms of Israeli insolence and arrogance. It said that, just before the elections, an Israeli military coup is taking place in which excessive promises are not enough, and which requires actions to consolidate these promises on the field.

Fatah warned against everything that is happening, saying that it has become necessary for the Palestinian position of rejection of injustice and submission to Israeli terrorism to coalesce, and that it has also become necessary for Fatah, the Palestinian National Authority, and the PLO to galvanize Arab, Islamic, and international official and popular positions to reaffirm the fact that Palestinian peace is the key to the Middle East's safety and stability and also the key to world peace.

Fatah said that despite its criticism of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's tendency to deal with the crisis rather than addressing its basics and causes, the final statement offers some positive elements, requiring the setting up of a follow-up mechanism in the shape of an open working group for all the summit's participants to prepare recommendations on the best way to implement the conference's resolutions. Fatah warned Israel that its security will not be achieved through wrecking the peace process and cornering the people in despair and depression, but that, instead, the security of the whole area can only be achieved through a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, and that security and safety are the natural outcome of the peace of the bold. A peace based on security measures, closure, blockade, and submission is rejected by all Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and the world's free peoples.

Palestinian Affairs: Council Members Complain Israel Hindering Their Movements

TA1903082396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Several Palestinian leaders are complaining that Israel is restricting the movements of the Autonomy Council members. Council member Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] said that Israel is violating the agreement to guarantee the council members' freedom of movement.

Palestinian sources told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that three members of the Autonomy Council,

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including attorney Ziyad Abu- Zayyad, were detained at the Erez crossing for four hours. One of the council members, 'Abd-al-Jawad Salah, accused Israel of seeking to disrupt the Autonomy Council's activities.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Terms for Attending Executive Committee, PNC Meetings

TA1803163196 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 9

["Exclusive" to AL-QUDS]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, Intermedia — A prominent Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] member has asserted that the PFLP will participate again in the PLO Executive Committee meetings on one condition — namely, that the Palestine National Council [PNC] secretariat and the Executive Committee hold a joint meeting to prepare the convocation of the 21st PNC session.

Taysir Qub'ah, member of the PFLP Political Bureau, said that he and Executive Committee member 'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh will participate in the meeting.

In an exclusive statement to AL-QUDS, Qub'ah stressed that if the PNC is convened, the PFLP will participate in its meetings provided that the invitation for it will not be to amend the Palestinian National Charter only. He said that the PFLP does not intend to participate in the new government.

It is worth noting that the PFLP has boycotted the Executive Committee meetings since the signing of the Oslo accords.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Representative Discusses Summit, Relations, Funds

JN1903211396 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 18 Mar 96 pp 18-19

[Interview with Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative, in Jordan, by Jamal Khashuqji in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khashuqji] What is Hamas' [Islamic Resistace Movement] stand on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit?

[Nazzal] The summit was an Israeli idea. We had hoped that other states, especially the Arab states, which are our partners in confronting a common enemy, would not have heeded such an idea. Despite our disagreement with the proposed peaceful plans, we were satisfied when President Mubarak shifted the focus from the Israeli objective of confronting Hamas only to a summit of continuing peace. Then, someone had to talk about ending the occupation as a key to peace. This is what Hamas wants.

On the other hand, we reject the terrorism charges. Everything that contradicts the Zionist interest is now deemed terrorism. Meanwhile, the world is ignoring the state terrorism against the Palestinian people. The occupation per se is a form of terrorism. So you can imagine the situation if repression and confiscation of rights are added to the occupation. As always, Hamas will prove it is up to the challenges. At the same time, Hamas is ready to deal with political solutions to ease the tension in the region while maintaining the Palestinian people's historic and inalienable rights.

[Khashuqji] Is there a relationship between you and other organizations in the region, such as the Islamic Group and the Jihad Movement in Egypt and Algeria?

[Nazzal] There is no relationship. Hamas is intellectually and ideologically different from those organizations. It is a Palestinian faction working to end the occupation. It is preoccupied with this objective and does not interfere in domestic Arab affairs.

[Khashuqji] The Palestinian charity organizations in the occupied territories have been hurt because of their suspected relationship with Hamas. What is the reality of this relationship?

[Nazzal] The Palestinian people have been done great injustice by the current destruction of the educational and charity institutions and kindergartens on the pretext of destroying the Hamas infrastructure. It is painful that Palestinians are doing other Palestinians injustice. The Authority must return to its senses and stop such irresponsible actions. It is necessary to differentiate between Hamas as a political movement and the Palestinian Islamic movement which began working before the establishment of Hamas in the service of our miserable, afflicted people.

[Khashuqji] What about your relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood [MB]? Is Hamas a member of the MB international organization?

[Nazzal] Hamas emerged from the Palestinian Islamic movement, whose roots can be found in the MB. However, Hamas turned into a general popular trend that converges with the world Islamic movement in guidelines and details. However, there is no organizational relationship between Hamas and the MB international organization.

[Khashuqji] Hamas has been accused of using Britain as a center for passing funds for Hamas activities in the occupied land. What is your comment?

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[Nazzal] First, our right to resistance is legitimate. As long as we are not violating the laws of any country, we will not be ashamed of what we are doing. The Israelis, along with the Americans, talk about financial activity by Hamas in Britain. What they are talking about are the activities of legitimate charity societies that have nothing to do with Hamas. Now, whoever offers to support an orphan or open a public clinic in a Palestinian town or camp is considered a suspect. This is unfair in comparison with the huge funds received by the extremist Jewish organizations. It is high time the world talked about the fact that the Zionist settlement activity in the West Bank is being funded with an official and popular knowledge and participation in the United States although this constitutes a flagrant violation of international law. The West Bank is still occupied. The Islamic charity organizations do not finance illegitimate settlement activity, but help the indigenous owners of the land to meet their basic needs which have been ignored by the occupation.

Palestinian Affairs: Radicals Said Fulfilling Iran's Plan Against Peace Process

TA1903160596 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 18 Mar 96 pp 1, 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Diplomatic sources have confirmed the existence of an Iranian plan, with the participation of a number of Arab states, aimed at harming the Palestinian people's future and striking at the peace process. These sources attested to the reliability of President Yasir 'Arafat's statements published by the German magazine DER SPIEGEL.

The sources added that Iran is supporting several extremist groups and training their members in special camps in Iran and some Arab states to carry out acts of violence in a bid to embarrass the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], strike at the peace process, and help the forces of extremism in Israel. These sources believe that this decision was made in Tehran following a meeting, attended by six extremist groups, in a suburb of the Iranian capital. Tehran asked these six groups to act and do everything possible to foil the peace process.

The sources disclosed that these groups received $7 million to implement the drawn-up plans and cooperate in one way or another with the forces of extremism in Israel and the international arena.

The sources said that the extremists' leaders left Tehran before the recent operations and returned before the convocation of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference after being summoned by an official of the Iranian intelligence service who oversees the work of extremist groups in the international arena.

The sources add that a number of Arab states are aware of, bless, and aid these plans in various forms. The plans seek to strike at the PNA and harm the Palestinian people's future. The sources say that these states, in cooperation with Iran, implicitly hinted at providing more aid and support to the extremist groups. They also promised to launch a dialogue for them with the Israeli authorities.

The sources revealed that the extremists' leaders own luxurious homes in many capitals and that their families live in European and Scandinavian countries. These family members travel with Iranian and Arab passports granted to them by a number of countries that support this subversive scheme.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abd-al-Rahim on Interrogation of Recent Detainees

TA1903162696 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by 'Abd-al-Raziq Abu-Jazr]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Legislative Council member al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim has affirmed that the siege imposed by Israel on the Palestinian territories will lead to the realization of the aims of extremists who carry out the terrorist operations. He expressed the hope that the Israeli Government will understand this matter.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, 'Abd-al-Rahim said that the National Authority [NA] is acting with limited possibilities and with all its people and potential against terrorism. He added that Israel — throughout its occupation of the Palestinian territories — could not achieve what the NA has in preserving our people's security and fulfilling the commitments stipulated in the agreements signed between the two sides.

'Abd-al-Rahim affirmed that those arrested in the wake of the recent operations are currently being interrogated. He explained that the NA has uncovered some important and grave matters that will positively affect the destruction of the infrastructure of regional extremist elements. He expressed the belief that the Palestinian Security Services have fulfilled their duties in the best way possible. He affirmed that these investigations will be disclosed when circumstances warrant.

He said that the NA is acting according to its own convictions. He added: "We must preserve the peace process by fulfilling our commitments." He affirmed that the detainees include figures who are wanted or not wanted and who we believe are threatening Palestinian security and NA commitments. They are currently under interrogation. We will disclose this matter at the appropriate time.

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Algeria

Algeria: 'High-Ranking Sources' Say 70,000 Reservists Called Up

MM2003112496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Algeria Calls Up 70,000 Reservists; Deployments on Both Sides of Border With Morocco" — punctuation as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London AL-HAYAH — Two new developments took place yesterday, presaging further complications in the Western Saharan issue and a further deterioration in Algerian-Moroccan relations. Information received from Algiers says that Algeria has called up 70,000 reservists and that there are deployments on both sides of the border amid predictions that the Moroccan Royal Forces could seize all the Western Sahara if the United Nations decides to withdraw its mission from the area next month.

In a surprising step South Africa has announced its decision to recognize the "Saharan Democratic Arab Republic" proclaimed by the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] in the [Western] Sahara.

It has been reported in Algeria that the city of Mostaganem, in the western part of the country, was the center of yesterday's official celebrations marking the 34th anniversary of Victory Day, which are held under the slogan "We Will Not Forget the Martyrs' Will."

It is noted that there has been special mobilization for the event despite its coincidence with the resumption of the Transitional National Council's sessions to hear the statements of the ministers in Ahmed Ouyahia's government, first and foremost the foreign minister, the finance minister, and the justice minister. And official media services have been working to draw the people's attention to the dangers threatening Algeria's security and stability.

The celebrations were preceded by cultural and political festivals organized a few days ago by the "Saharan Republic," whose representatives in Algeria expressed their fears that "the fighting might resume" in the area.

Some Western diplomatic sources do not rule out that Morocco could seize all the Saharan territory after the international forces leave at the end of next month. The Algerian authorities have expressed "concern" over reports of the deployment of 30,000 Moroccan troops. Sources close to the regime say that Moroccan deployments pose a threat to Algeria's security and stability."

In this context political sources have said that the Saharan issue and relations with Morocco were among the topics discussed at the meeting held yesterday morning between Ahmed Attaf [Algerian minister of state for cooperation and Maghreb affairs] and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau. The talks were expanded later to include members of the two delegations.

High-ranking sources have revealed to AL-HAYAH that the [Algerian] Military Command has called up 70,000 reservists to join their barracks. The sources do not rule out that a state of alert could be announced later on the Algerian-Moroccan border in anticipation of "any potential attack."

The sources add that there is an "intention" to recall retired generals to task them with "new missions." And there have recently been reports in west Algeria that armed Islamic groups fled toward Morocco after the operation they carried out against a train in Tlemsan (in the west) early this month, which resulted in about 10 people being killed.

Some media sources say that the current escalation has resulted in a reduction in the Algerian Army's operations against "the terrorists" in order to prepare for moving toward the Algerian-Moroccan border. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Pelletreau Visit Seen as Attempt to Normalize Relations

LD1903195496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is expected that talks between Algerian officials and the visiting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau will take place later today.

The American diplomat is carrying a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton to Liamine Zeroual, the president of the republic.

Pelletreau indicated, [upon arrival] that his talks with the Algerian officials will focus on the current situation in Algeria and in the region. Talks will also focus on Algerian-American relations which, in the view of many observers, have been lukewarm at times, as there has been no real desire to normalize them.

The following is a quick review of the history of Algerian-American relations in the past four years with Noreddine Moussadek:

[Moussadek] The first high-level direct contact between Washington and Algiers in four years is taking place at the moment on the occasion of the visit of U.S.

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Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau to Algiers. This visit by a high ranking official is seen as an attempt to normalize [relations] and to end the state of lukewarm relations between Algeria and the United States.

The White House is trying, through this visit, to open a new chapter with Algeria aiming at renewing consultations on a number of topics in order to end the misunderstandings which have hitherto colored their relations, at least in the past four years.

However, one can see in retrospect that the misunderstanding started as a result of the double standard in the American position on the events and the situation inside Algeria. A position which has fluctuated between the State Department's view on the need for a reconciliation [in Algeria] which should include the dissolved Islamic Salvation Front, and the White House's view on the need for appeasement [in the country].

However, such an American position could not have survived following the new realities [in Algeria], i.e. the holding of the first pluralistic presidential poll on 16 November 1995 in the presence of 400 foreign journalists could have not been ignored, for they were the proof that dialogue, which hailed with the politicians, had borne fruit with the people. Furthermore, these elections also shut up those voices which had been urging [the authorities] to respect the rules of democratic game as the elections were free and fair. Also, it is worth mentioning here that Pelletreau's visit to Algiers takes place only a few months after the elections.

Moreover, a new reality has emerged: Algeria's description of the terrorism phenomenon as an Iranian-sponsored conspiracy has finally been accepted by the American Administration, particularly since the holding of Sharm al-Shaykh summit conference last week when fingers were pointed accusingly toward Tehran.

It is also worth mentioning their oil dealings here, when focusing on Algerian-American relations. Washington would like to bolster bilateral relations in this sphere given the liberalization of the economy and the economic reforms in the country which Washington has repeatedly and unreservedly welcomed.

Algeria: Prime Minister Ouyahia Meets U.S. Assistant Secretary Pelletreau

LD1903174896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia received Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, who is currently on an official visit to Algeria. Pelletreau carried a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton for President Liamine Zeroual. The meeting between Mr. Ouyahia and Mr. Pelletreau was an opportunity to exchange views about the bilateral relations aiming at consolidating them.

Mr. Ahmed Attaf, minister of foreign affairs, received Pelletreau at the ministry. The talks included the delegations of the two countries. They discussed bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

Mr. Pelletreau arrived yesterday afternoon in Algeria on a two-day visit, during which he will discuss with Algerian officials bilateral issues in particular and the current situation in Algeria and the region.

Algeria: Islamist Group Kills Textile Employees in Kabylie

LD2003095896 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 0837 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Islamist group cut the throats of six textile company employees and burned their bodies near Tizi Ouzou (Kabylie) on Monday [18 March] night, their colleagues announced on Wednesday.

The massacre took place a few hours after two bomb attacks, one against the police station of Tizi Ouzou, which caused the death of six people and injured another 26, and another in a village.

The six employees who had their throats cut came from Sid Ali Moussa, a village protected against the Islamists by a self-defense group, their colleagues said.

Algeria: Interior Minister on Need To Improve Security Apparatus

LD1903204996 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With regard to the extraordinary session of the Transitional National Council [TNC] on debating the program of Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia's government, and after the general discussion sessions which contained queries of the TNC members about the broad lines of the draft government program, it was the turn of the members of the government to reply to questions.

The minister of interior and the minister of justice talked today about the security situation, fighting terrorist actions, protecting public property, the extent of application of laws, and fighting bribery and corruption, as well as other issues which are reviewed in the following report.

The minister of interior, local authorities and environment stressed the state's determination to improve the security apparatus. He explained, in his reply to the

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questions of the members of the TNC with regard to amending electoral registers, that that operation is being carried out regularly at the end of every year in accordance with the conditions defined by the law on elections. He said that the relations of consultations and dialogue with associations were among the most important points of action of his ministry. He stressed that the protection of public property is the responsibility of those directly responsible for it and recalled the setting up of 20 companies in charge of guarding [public property]. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Ministers Comment on Government Program

LD1903181096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Members of the government have begun giving their replies to the queries put forward by members of the Provisional National Council about the government's program. Our Colleague Messaoud Boulatiour reports on the replies by Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, who was the first one to speak and try to explain the reasons behind Algeria's participation at Sharm al-Shaykh summit, as well as other matters.

[Boulatiour] As far as Algeria's participation at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is concerned, Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf said the decision took place following a thorough diagnosis which pinpointed our interests and with a certain knowledge that such a decision will conform with the principles of our foreign policies, particularly our belief that finding a lasting, just, and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israel conflict is an inevitable course. However, the aims for such a participation can be summarized by the following excerpt from Attaf's statement:

[Begin Attaf recording] First, to use Sharm al-Shaykh as a platform to put forward our views and policies on international terrorism. Second, to face up to the selective and biased views on the phenomenon of violence and terrorism, and to use the Sharm al-Shaykh conference as a platform to air our rejection of the double standard policies on terrorism. Third, to convince our partners at this conference, in particular the Westerners, that terrorism should under no circumstances be viewed as a means of political expression; rather it should only be viewed as a means of denying individual and collective human rights and as a means of shaking any country's stability and harming international peace and security. [end recording]

[Boulatiour] Regarding their queries on the country's policies towards European and Mediterranean countries, Attaf said that they were influenced by a number of realistic and objective factors, that is, relations of between neighbors, proximity, the fact that one-tenth of the world's population live in this area, the fact that Europe is a source for supplies and technology, and also the fact that 65 percent of our exports and 70 percent of our imports are with this region.

Attaf was at pains to explain that the exploratory talks were not aimed at joining the free trade zone, rather, he asserted, they were merely a means and not an end, because we are still waiting for European consideration of our industrial, technological, and management potential. Our views on this matter will remain at the next official talks due to take place in the coming months in order to explore to possibility of signing a partnership deal, he asserted.

The foreign minister did not say anything new about relations between France and Algeria. He only reviewed the reasons behind France's unilateral decision to take discriminatory measures against Air Algerie, and Algeria's reaction by ordering a halt for our flights to Paris. He reiterated, however, that Algeria's position will not change as long as this unilateral decision is not revoked.

Attaf also reiterated to members of the Transitional National Council that our interests in the Arab world are not neglected. However, he admitted that the volume of trade with the rest of the Arab countries is negligible, as our exports to the Eastern Arab countries represent only 0.08 percent of our total exports, and that our imports from them represent only 1.27 percent. This is despite the fact that our political relations with the rest of the Arab world are very good.

Concerning economic integration with the rest of the Maghreban countries, the foreign minister said that joint economic ventures are at a standstill; past experience has proven that it is difficult to go ahead with such ventures.

Furthermore, he indicated that bilateral ventures between Maghreban countries have failed, and disclosed that a number of ventures of this kind are being undone because of poor performance.

[Announcer] The following report by our correspondent Fodil Saadedine is a summary of the statements made by the minister of finance and the minister of justice:

[Saadedine] In his reply to questions by members of the Provisional National Council, Finance Minister Ahmed Benbitour disclosed that the country's foreign debts topped $32 billion by the end of 1995. He asserted, however, that the country's foreign currency reserves are stable and are estimated to be around $2 billion and that the country's foreign debts by 2004 should not be

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more $40 billion. He added, however, that Algeria was hoping for economic growth which will help in reducing the servicing of foreign debts by 50 percent.

As far as the state public spending is concerned, Benbitour indicated that the state deficit was estimated at 99 billion Algerian dinars. He asserted, however, that the government managed to cut the volume of the state borrowing needed to run its services from 70 percent in 1993 to 30 percent in 1995 of its total borrowing requirement, and that money spent on the economy has increased from 220 billion dinars in 1993 to 567 billion Algerian dinars in 1995.

The finance minister also dealt with a number of issues on taxation. He said that taxation will be more effective in the future following the introduction of modern and unified tax system.

The minister of justice, who was the third one to speak, had to deal first with a question on why laws are not being enforced. His reply was that it is not only the duty of the courts to make sure that laws are being enforced since the creation of the new government organ called the Judicial Enforcer, whose duty it is to oversee, with the help of the authorities, that laws are being enforced.

As far as the anti-corruption drive is concerned, the justice minister denied that such a drive is merely a contingent measure. He reiterated the commitment of the president of the republic to such a measure that was part of his political platform which the people endorsed in the presidential elections held on 16 November.

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS1803112096 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 18 Mar 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by the Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe"—quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Editorial: Who is the real terrorist in Alergia?!
Praise be to Allah,

How easy it has become nowadays to call one's opponents by all appellations in order to tarnish their image. Some terminology have been used and abused up to a point of loosing its original meaning in the people vocabulary. The most famous word in today's world situation is "terrorism". If the original definition as adopted by the UN is related to "violent actions for political objective", this organisation has never blamed some of its members states for practising terrorism. How can one classify a military coup d'Etat when no constitution allows it in any country? How such military coup is classified when on the top of its illegality, it is of a bloody type that triggered a more than four years old war with more than sixty thousands death and tens of thousands of people have disappeared as is the case of the "hottest point" on earth: Algeria? Up to now, the military regime in Algeria has not even dare to give a proper justification of the coup d'Etat of January 1992 which came to refuse the free popular choice of December 1991. A choice made freely without any violence contrary to the act of suppressing it. The military regime in Algeria has not dare to answer the basic question that the ten of thousands of people suspected of "having sympathy" with the political party which won the majority of the votes in those elections (FIS) and which are still asking four years later "why have we been arrested and why are we prisoners?". Since the violent coup d'Etat which obvious objective was to preserve the status-quo profitable to the Nomenklatura, the regime has always reacted in accordance to an Algeria popular adage which translate to "he beat me and cried then went to the judge before me and complain!". In other word, the military regime in Algeria has always been and by far, the most violent body, yet with its total monopoly on the media, has always had the "loudest cry" toward the international community saying "help! the "terrorists" are coming to get me!".

The military regime in Algeria does not let an opportunity to passes it by in trying to "mobilise" the international community to side up with the Generals in Algiers. The tomorrow's Cairo conference was not different for the regime. It has been trying since the announcement of the conference to "internationalise" the Generals problem trough a "push" from its "unconditional friend" Mubarak. The immediate visit to Israel following the announcement of the conference by two "unofficial" regime representatives Mrs Aslaoui and Khalida Messaoudi attests the continuous attempt of the military regime to project an amalgam to the international opinion between the Algerian internal conflict and other issues with no direct link.

When the military regime in Algeria brought General Zeroual to the "Presidency", it has claimed that Gen.Zeroual did not take part directly in the coup d'Etat. However his acts has shown that he is a fervent supporter of military dictatorship in Africa and other part of the third world and that he will never betray the military corporation from where he came from. That is probably why he was chosen instead of others in the first place. This army General has never distanced himself from the bloody military coup of January 1992 on the contrary he has been periodically praising military dictatorship by

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action while his talk evolved around "democracy" for external consumption. The few days ago official reception of "Mr small x" is a perfect illustration. Gen. Zeroual has given the illegal military new rulers of Niger, a "royal" reception as if compensating for what he did not have himself before November 95. It is also important to note the "anti- democratic military club" that is being formed at the head of which is Egypt, the first country to give Niger's military regime a "royal" reception followed by that of the Algiers regime. What is burlesque in all this is the final declaration of the visit to Algiers when the military of both countries joined hands in praising "democracy"!

Many regimes in Algeria and elsewhere in the muslim land have been promoting this past years, the idea that no change can occur in those countries except through force and violence and nothing can stop changes except force and violence. This mentality which is predominant in the "high spheres of command" is holding the Ummah back at a time where nations and people elsewhere in the world are undergoing changes and entering modern times at the "speed of light". For the purpose of lasting as long as possible, those regimes are entertaining many myths amongst them that which relates internal changes to "imminent and direct economical lost for influential powers".

Everything is good in absorbing the Algerian workers anger!

The military regime prime minister Ouyahyia has apparently back down on his initial plan of cutting the workers wages. He has nevertheless put down a contingency which is different from the first in details but is still identical to it in the unjust principles it is built on. The initial plan was to cut the workers' wages for a period of ten months and should affect all wages greater than 6,000 Algerian dinars. The new plan is reduced to three months and affect wages greater than 10 000 Algerian dinars.

What conclusion can one draw from such versatile policy? What does it mean to be satisfied with roughly less than 20% of the initial demand and from where is Mr Ouyahyia going to topple the apparently badly needed other 80%?

This simply means that Mr Ouyahyia's government team is a team of technocrats most of them inexperienced. They are asked to dupe the people by showing they are in charge of the political orientation when in fact they all strictly follow the Generals orders. They seem to have been picked up by their aptitude to make demagogical and empty speeches as Mr Ouyahyia's speech at the Junta parliament on Tuesday shows. One of Mr Ouyahyia's staff have pushed the demagogy as far as adopting late president Boumedien clothing style (a "burnous" on the top of the shoulders). He must still think that it would exempt him from any accountability and that the Algerian people need only demagogues to play on their "sensitive and affective strings" to feel "an euphoria of satisfaction". His calendar has probably stopped at 1978.

Going back to Mr Ouyahyia's second plan, it is still an unjust plan even if it craftily drawn in accordance with the policy of "divide in order to rule" and the Algerian workers must continue the struggle to scrape all of this "dictatorial" style of governing despite the UGTA's president treason to the workers rights and the show he put out last 24th February. Mr Ouyahyia if he really and urgently needed financial cash, has plenty of ways to get it if only he had the power and courage to confront the right people instead of the workers. Cutting workers wages can not be accepted at all unless on a voluntary basis.

The military regime war against the political opposition still continues!

The military regime is still continuing its war against its political opposition by focusing this time on the FFS [Socialist Forces Front] party using its famous method of "dislocating the head from the body". This method has been by now perfected further from when it was first applied to the FIS in 1991 when its leaders have been sent to jail.

The regime are making it difficult for the FFS to hold its congress and is doing all it can to prevent the FFS chairman Hocine Ait Ahmed to participate in it personally. A media campaign has been launched by the regime propaganda machine which tries to falsely portray a haemorrhage of militants from the FFS. The regime has also tried to turn the public opinion against the FFS by "playing the sensitive strings" once more. The military regime interior minister is "articulating" his propaganda campaign on two main subjects or rather projected images: Mr Hocine Ait Ahmed is asking to be considered as a VIP personality which is not new since the regime secret police as well as those "fabricated in its bakery" have always affixed the word "Zaim" (leader in a pejorative sense) to Mr Ait Ahmed. The second point of the defamation campaign is to tell the Algerian people in this period of economical crisis that the FFS wants to use public money (in hard currency) in order to invite its foreign guests.

Beyond all this "cacophony" and "diversion tactic" it seems that the military regime is happy with the status quo thanks to the recent oil and gas contracts and that nothing is to be expected from it willingly that would

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bring to the people sincere and long lasting hope of peace.

News of jihad and Mujahedeen.

Jihad in Algeria: Between precise objective and sterile philosophy!

It used to be good news when one hears about a new periodical publication coming to the scene and which supports the legitimate armed struggle of the Mujahedeen in Algeria. In this past two and a half years ago or so the felling has changed and any new publication praising Jihad in Algeria is not spontaneously supported any more. It has to go through a period of observation from the readers until the "publication path" as well as of those writing in it is known. Indeed how can one support publications when in the middle of a wide campaign to muzzle the Algerian Islamists voice in Europe can read in one of them a big headline "Yes, we are terrorists!". In this provocative title which only Allah knows for sure the objective, the writers in those publications went even further in using isolated and irrelevant to the situation quranic verses and sayings of the prophet (p.b.u.h) to "demonstrate" that "terrorism is the natural way of Muslims". It is on those publications that "fatawi" (legal Islamic verdicts) which have made the "killing of women in Algeria a licit act" according to their authors who have never seen Algeria or put their feet on it. Islam is strict on the required conditions for somebody to issue a fatwa (legal Islamic verdict). A mufti needs to know what is in the book of Allah and the Sunnah (traditions) of the prophet (p.b.u.h) on the subject as well having a complete knowledge of the actual situation in which the fatwa is supposed to be applied to. Many crimes perpetrated against the Algerian people have originated from such "fatawi". And many publications have reached a level of blindness that if someone says the prophet (p.b.u.h) said so and so, he or she will be answered "no, the Armed Group mufti has said so and so!". Despite the extensive use of unconnected Quranic verses and sayings of the prophet (p.b.u.h), those publications have lost the muslims trust in them and their path is seen as that of those who have a fixed fikh (legislation) and idea and go to the Book of Allah and the sayings of the prophet (p.b.u.h) trying to pick up what may seen at first to sustain their false arguments. The authors of those publications have no problem what so ever in "proving" to the muslims by quoting (inapplicable) quranic verses and sayings of the prophet (p.b.u.h) that the killing of Algerian women is good for Islam and the Muslims. So is the killing of Mujahedeen leaders "from behind" such as Azzedine Baa (May Allah accept him as martyr). They have no problem is explaining "why it is good" for the mujahedeen to start fighting each other "now than later". They can explain why it was good for the "sake of Allah" to slaughter Shaykh Mohamed Said and Shaykh Abderrazak Radjam. They are at ease in supporting the murder of the old imam Abdelbaki Sahraoui in his mosque in Paris. Everything goes and for every crime against Islam and the Muslims, the writers of such publications have no problem in bringing from the book of Allah and the sayings of the prophet (p.b.u.h) quotations and pretend to support the above crimes, in Allah is the believer's refuge. Their publications have affected Jihad in Algeria very negatively by making many muslims walking away from it when they learn that even barbaric crimes perpetrated by the regime secret police are immediately and spontaneously put in the account of the Mujahedeen in those publications which take the act as a necessary action to attract publicity to the group they support. All of the above and much more have let the muslim who support Jihad in Algeria very unsure about how to take new publications.

Lately, and more precisely following the murder of Shaykh Mohamed Said by the GIA, a new publication has come to the London Islamic arena. The first three issues have concentrated on the mischiefs and deviations of the GIA in a great details. Details that any Allah fearing believer would have wished they were available when the GIA declared licit the killing of women or when the veteran of the Islamic armed struggle and "disciple" of Shaykh Mustapha Bouyali, Azzedine Baa was murdered, or when a communique published in one of the above publications and attributed to the GIA has put on a death row many of the FIS leadership members,or...or... Nevertheless a late truth is better than no truth at all! In the last issue of the new publication, the writer felt in a legitimate position to demand from the Islamic Salvation Army "few key questions" that the AIS should answer. Before hearing the answers, the writer concluded that the situation is in need of a new Jihadic banner (to be discussed later on Incha Allah)!

For the questions, the writer ask about how the actual regime and General Zeroual should be considered: believers or unbelievers. This kind of question has been around for so long and have been used by many to justify their walking out of the FIS. It can however "be answered" by the questions: "How about Gen. Zeroual's tailor, is he a believer or an unbeliever?...and how about the one who provide him with the needles (assuming he is an Algerian owner of a needle company), is he a believer or not? How about the one who guard this later company is he a believer or not? And the one who transport the guardian is he a believer or not? One can go one like this for ever and ends up by giving the whole society the attribute one has started with!

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This kind of unproductive thinking is the first step in the "takfiri" theology. A theology which has as far as Algeria is concerned made licit what Allah has declared illicite in terms of the Muslim blood, honour and wealth. This theology has made the "marriage for pleasure" a common practice among those who wanted to mix the higher duty in Islam with the lower animal needs. In this kind of situation, one needs to go back to the sunnah (traditions) of the prophet and his companion may Allah be pleased with them. Here is Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib may Allah be pleased with him to whom a group of people have declared war. These people were fighting companions of the prophet (p.b.u.h) who were giving the good tidings by the prophet before he died, of being amongst the people of paradise. When Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked "are these people kuffar (unbelievers)?" he answered: "they are people who have fought us so we have fought them back!". He did not elaborate in things which at the end only Allah knows. Islam and Jihad are not based on human feelings no mater how believers these humans may be. They are based on a set of values and injunctions put out by the Mighty Creator to the weak creature! And even on this, Muslim history is full of stories. Here is again Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) in one of the battle having thrown his opponent on the ground and having him at the mercy of his sword. The pagan did not find anything better to do than to spit on the noble face of Ali. Ali Ibn Abi Talib let the pagan go free. Ali's opponent was astonished and asked him about the reason. Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) said:"I was killing you for Allah's sake but when you spat on my face, my sincerity was endanger because of the personal feelings.".

Very close to us is the example set by the father of the Islamic armed struggle in Algeria: Shaykh Mustapha Bouyali who was FORCED [as published] to the maquis in the eighties. In one occasion the regime secret police went to Bouyali's oldest brother, took him out of the house by force and killed him in front of his son. This was supposed to bring Mustapha Bouyali out of his secret base but the Shaykh when he heard the sad news said his famous saying: "I do not take revenge, I fight for the sake of Allah!". Shaykh Mustapha Bouyali was killed in a battle near the locality of Sehaoula on the 3rd January 1987 May Allah Accepts him as Martyr.

The writer asks about the ability of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) to be the right banner of Jihad in Algeria. The AIS represents a continuity from the FIS political struggle to the armed struggle. Its leadership such as Madani Mezrak, Ahmed Benaicha... have been known in the Islamic scene well before the creation of the FIS itself. The AIS infrastructure has been quite impenetrable to the Junta secret police. The AIS is very well organised in the Eastern and Western parts of the country and most importantly it has the adhesion of the people. In the centre however, things are not that organised and one can found Kataib (Units of mujahedeen) with allegiance to the AIS, others who are faithful to the FIS and the jailed leaders but without being organically related to the AIS national leadership. Another category is those Kataib who have dissociate themselves from the GIA following the murder of Shaykh Mohamed Said and Abderazak Redjam and Allah knows they are quite a few. Finally there exist what is left of the armed group GIA. The publication suggest the establishment of a new Mujahedeen organisation made up principally by those unites who have dissociated themselves from the GIA. Wouldn't it be more productive to complete the AIS infrastructure by organising the centre which has been delayed many times by the enemy manoeuvres. The muslim in Algeria are not interested at all about who is going to bring victory over the oppressors as long as he is not an oppressor in an Islamic clothes because he will not last as the muslims will fight even those who speak with the "Koranic language" while having "Pharaoh's behaviour". The publication also asks about the very long term objective and the Kilafah. The AIS has always been realistic and had never promise the muslims things it can not deliver. If such very long term were a mater of divergence in the past many muslim countries will be still under colonialism by now because the people would have not agreed on the banner. Jihad in Algeria should have a well defined objective at this stage: that of getting ride of the dictatorship which has refuse the Islamic choice of the people. With this very precise objective, all energies can be joined together and converge to realise it as the independence was realised and as other precise objectives will be realised in the future insha Allah and all pointing towards that not only strategic objective of the reunification of the Ummah but also a religious duty as demonstrated by Shaykh Ali Belhadj in his book: "Guidance and advice in showing verdicts on renegade and truce" (Al Irshad wan-Nussh fi bayane Ar-Rida wa As-Sulh).

Egypt

Egypt: Turkey's Demirel on Euphrates Waters, Talks With Mubarak

TA1903154396 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 1300 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Seref Yigit report from Aswan]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Suleyman Demirel replied to reporters' questions aboard the plane en route to Egypt. Explaining that the Middle East peace process

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and the situation in Iraq will be discussed during talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Demirel said that there are possibilities for the further development of bilateral relations.

Answering a question, Demirel said that no one was hurt by Turkey with regard to the water issue. He noted: There is no such problem with regard to water, because the Euphrates waters that run to Syria constitute ten times the needs of that country. There is no problem. It is not as though their fields have dried up and they are complaining.

Demirel remarked that although it does not have any current needs, Syria is acting as though it deserves half the waters of the Euphrates River.

In reply to another question, Demirel declared that Turkey and Egypt are cooperating on the subject of terrorism; the relevant agreement is ready for signing, but has not been signed yet.

Asked if Turkey has a plan with regard to the Middle East peace process, the president said: No, there is no plan. We are discussing everything and assessing the issues.

Demirel's plane landed at Aswan airport around 1210. He was ceremoniously received by Mubarak. The two presidents are now holding a tete-a-tete meeting in Aswan. Demirel and Mubarak are expected to issue a joint statement after the meeting. Demirel will also visit the Aswan Dam and return to Turkey at night. Foreign Minister Emre Gonensay is accompanying Demirel on his visit.

Egypt: Mubarak, Turkey's Demirel Hold News Conference

NC1903163896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aswan, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stated that he discussed with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel several important issues, notably the status of the Middle East peace process in the wake of Sharm al-Shaykh's summit of peacemakers.

He added: We also discussed other issues including the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and relations between Egypt and Turkey.

Speaking at a joint news conference with President Demirel after the conclusion of their talks in Aswan today, President Mubarak welcomed the Turkish president's visit and emphasized the depth of relations between the two countries. He said that the two sides always take care to exchange views over regional issues and matters of mutual interest.

President Demirel said his country's relations with Egypt are close and strong, adding: What we are trying to do is forge stronger ties between the two countries.

He added: I believe we have a real legal foundation for strong ties between Egypt and Turkey. We have increased the volume of trade and investment for the benefit of the two fraternal nations.

Demirel pointed out that Egypt and Turkey are two of the largest countries in this region and because of this they feel responsible for maintaining peace and working jointly to establish a comprehensive regional political settlement.

He praised President Mubarak's efforts to achieve peace in the region. He told Mubarak: Your Excellency, I congratulate you on this, especially when I see the progress of peace. We feel reassured by this and all of us are grateful to you for your peace efforts. We wish to stress our continued backing for the peace process.

President Demirel asserted that Sharm al-Shaykh's summit of peacemakers was very important. Referring to his talks with President Mubarak, he said: We have agreed to follow up on what was achieved at that summit and to coordinate efforts in this connection. I have invited President Mubarak to visit Turkey so that we can resume our discussions on this matter.

The Turkish president described his talks with President Mubarak as useful and said they will boost ties between the two nations and help settle the region's problems.

Demirel said: We must seek to understand these problems. I believe that Turkey and Egypt wish to have a greater level of cooperation and coordination.

Asked for his views on current Israeli actions and how he envisages the future of the Middle East peace process, the Turkish president said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was very successful, noting that the invitation to Turkey from President Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton came at the appropriate time.

He added: At Sharm al-Shaykh we decided to demonstrate the international community's solidarity against all terrorists, not only in Israel, but all forms of terrorism everywhere. We must combat and condemn terrorism regardless of its motives. This time the condemnation came from 29 countries that met not only to denounce terrorism but to eradicate it.

President Mubarak commented on this issue, saying: I would like to add something, namely that the peace process was on the verge of collapse after the bombings

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and the subsequent tension between Palestinians and Israelis. There was a deadlock. If we had not acted to show fresh support for the peace process, the situation would have moved in a more serious direction and the peace operation would have become chaotic. I cannot now tell what would have happened if we had not acted.

President Mubarak described the Sharm al-Shaykh conference as a major summit attended by the seven major powers and other countries. He said their objective was to bolster the peace process and prevent the situation from reaching an explosive state.

He added that the countries that attended the Sharm al-Shaykh conference will hold a ministerial meeting in Washington to follow up on the resolutions adopted by the summit.

Asked if Egypt and Turkey have agreed to set up new projects together, President Mubarak said that there is a lot of bilateral cooperation and there are numerous existing agreements between the two countries. He said two new agreements are under discussion and the Egyptian-Turkish Joint Committee will meet soon to approve them.

Asked if there are any plans for military cooperation between Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel, Turkish President Demirel replied: I do not think this issue is currently under discussion. We cannot predict what will happen in the future, however.

Demirel continued: Nevertheless Egypt and Turkey are very friendly. They both support regional peace. There are no obstacles at this time to the promotion of our joint interests. We must look forward to further military cooperation; and we are actually cooperating in the military defense industry.

Answering the same question, President Mubarak said: Primarily we wish to boost the peace process. We have no plans for, and indeed have given no thought at all to, military cooperation such as you ask about. Of course, we have good military cooperation with Turkey but we are not looking forward to any military cooperation that is directed against anybody else.

President Mubarak was asked about Syria's purported backing for terrorism, the tension that has plagued Turkey's relations with the Arab League over the issue of the Euphrates River water, and what role he can play to ease the tension. He replied: We have no evidence that Syria is participating in any terrorist operations. Syria is seeking peace and has joined the peace process. At this time there are some problems in connection with this process but Syria hopes to see peace established in the region and looks forward to an agreement with Israel.

On the relations between Turkey and the Arab League, President Mubarak said: I do not think there is a bad situation between the Arab League and Turkey. I wish to state frankly that reports on tension between the two sides are untrue.

Regarding the statement that the Arab League plans to issue concerning the Euphrates water and whether there are any plans to amend this statement, President Suleyman Demirel said: I think this issue must be properly understood. Turkey does not harm any of its neighbors.

Concerning the roles played by Egypt and Turkey in regional and international issues, President Demirel said: These issues do not concern Egypt and Turkey alone, but are of interest to the whole world. However, Egypt and Turkey are linked by numerous strong bonds. They are both trying to solve current problems. We wish to state that we resist terrorism because it seeks to thwart the peace process. We say welcome to peace.

Asked if the new coalition government in Turkey will produce a change in the country's foreign policy toward the Middle East, the peace process, or the EU, President Demirel said that Turkish foreign policy follows a specific program and is a continuation of longstanding policies. He remarked: Certainly there might be some change but I do not expect a big change.

He added: The country's prior commitments will be respected and will continue. Fortunately our people have succeeded in electing a full parliament and a government that has won this parliament's confidence.

President Demirel said he hopes that the new coalition government will succeed in serving the Turkish people's interests and goals.

In answer to a question about reports that Turkey has massed troops on the Iraqi border and is planning to enter Iraqi territory, President Demirel said: Iraqi territory is not our concern. We are facing a terrorist problem on our territory, however. We must, of course, purge our territory and make sure that our people are safe and live in peace.

The Turkish president added: We have no plans at all to enter other countries' territories.

Asked if Turkey agrees with the Egyptian emphasis on the need to respect the integrity of Iraqi borders and territory, President Demirel said: Yes, certainly.

Asked if the two presidents' discussions have touched on the Euphrates water issue, President Mubarak asked President Demirel to answer this question. The Turkish president stated that there is now no conflict over the

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water issue because 1,000 cubic meters of water cross the border from Turkey to Syria [no time unit specified] and that there is no problem at all and no harm is being done.

President Mubarak was asked if he considers the Workers Party of Kurdistan, which is banned in Turkey, a terrorist organization. He said: This is a matter that we can discuss with President Demirel but not at a news conference.

Egypt: Turkish President Ends Visit, Departs

NC1903182096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1728 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aswan, 19 Mar (MENA)—Turkish President Suleyman Demirel left Aswan this evening after a brief visit to Egypt that lasted several hours. He was seen off at Aswan Airport by President Husni Mubarak and Engineer Mahir Abazah, the electricity minister and chairman of the honorary escort that accompanied the Turkish president during his visit.

During his brief visit the Turkish president held talks with President Mubarak about recent developments in the Middle East in the wake of last Wednesday's [13 March] Sharm al-Shaykh's summit of peacemakers. They also discussed several regional and international issues of common interest and ways of promoting bilateral ties in various fields.

Egypt: Al-Baz on Sharm al-Shaykh Summit, Other Issues

NC1903154796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1430 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aswan, 19 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, said that the meeting of the working group emanating from the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh slated for late March in Washington will be held at the level of senior officials, experts, and technical staff concerned with security and stability.

Dr. al-Baz said in statements in Aswan at noon today that the meeting will discuss the issue of security and stability in its various aspects. He added that fighting terrorism will be one of these aspects.

Al-Baz pointed out that Egypt is preparing the vision it will submit to the meeting, and that a balanced Egyptian-Arab position that serves the interests of the various parties concerned, and not Israeli interests alone, will be developed.

He added that the Washington meeting will be attended by the states that took part in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and who express a desire to participate. He explained that the meeting will not discuss ways to give momentum to the peace process, since this issue is being considered at a higher level.

Dr. al-Baz noted that President Husni Mubarak is holding contacts with the parties directly concerned with the issue. There are ongoing contacts with the Palestinian leadership and the Israeli government and consultations with Syria have not ceased; they will continue in the coming stage, al-Baz said.

He pointed out that President Mubarak's talks with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri during his recent visit dealt with coordination and consultation on Lebanon's vision and how to activate matters in the coming stage.

In response to a question on his assessment of the view of some people that Israel made the greatest gains at the International Summit of Peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh, whereas the Arab parties made a mediocre gain, Dr. al-Baz stressed that this view is completely erroneous and ignores the reality of the situation. He asserted that the Arab party achieved several gains, most importantly the overall decision to continue the peace process and not suspend it. He called for abstaining from giving the impression that the peace process is an Israeli demand and that the Arabs do not desire peace. He stressed that the process of peace, stability, and security in the region is in the interest of the Arabs even if it serves Israel's interests.

Al-Baz pointed out that not everything that achieves Israel's interests is detrimental to us. On the contrary, if Israel's interests are consistent with peace—and we believe this even though some Israelis do not—then Arab interests are consistent with peace, because the continuation of the peace process will inevitably result in Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories.

Dr. al-Baz stressed that the continuation of the peace process means proceeding toward a final settlement to determine the final status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which is in the interests of the Palestinian people. He said that the second gain made by the Arab party from the peace process is the call to strengthen security and achieve stability, which is in the interests of all of us, and to fight extremism and terrorism because several Arab countries suffer from terrorism, not Israel alone.

Dr. al-Baz noted that the Palestinian people themselves have suffered from terrorism and were exposed to acts of aggression against worshipers in the al-Aqsa Mosque, at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, and other incidents. He pointed out that it was clear that the process

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of combating terrorism was not limited to only acts directed against Israel or the Israelis. All the leaders who addressed the summit were concerned to make their speeches balanced on this issue.

Dr. al-Baz pointed out that the third gain for the Arabs was directing the dialogue so that the discussions did not turn into a demonstration against Islam and Muslims, and preventing any attempt to distort the image of Islam and persuading all the participants in the Summit of Peacemakers that there is no such thing as Islamic extremism or terrorism. Terrorism is not confined to certain people or nations, but is a phenomenon from which numerous peoples are suffering.

Al-Baz said that correcting this image is in the interest of the Arab nation and is absolutely not in Israel's. He noted that if Israel benefits from this, the Arab nation benefits much more, particularly from the European countries' understanding of the need to take a responsive and cooperative stance with the position of the Arab countries.

Dr. al-Baz emphasized that the measures and restrictions that Israel imposed on the Palestinian territories have become less tight than they were before the Sharm al-Shaykh summit in terms of travel to the industrial area in Erez, opening the (Kerny) crossing point to commodities from and to the Palestinian territory, and permitting the export of agricultural produce and travel between towns and villages.

Dr. al-Baz said that Israel showed a readiness to deal with more flexibility, openness, and responsiveness after the Summit of Peacemakers at Sharm al-Shaykh than before. He voiced his hope that things will proceed on this course. He noted that things will gradually return to what they were before the wave of bombings. He said that it is not realistic to wait for lifting the Israeli measures suddenly, because they have their own considerations and fears of new suicidal incidents that may lead to new setbacks in the situation.

Dr. al-Baz said that the Palestinian Authority has taken measures to consolidate stability in the region, which will make continuation or escalation of these measures and restrictions unlikely.

Regarding the demand of certain Arab countries to reconvene the Madrid conference, Dr. al-Baz said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was based on the Madrid conference resolutions, because the peace process stemmed from the Madrid conference held late in October 1991. He noted that most of the countries that participated in the Madrid conference were represented at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, except for Syria and Lebanon. He said that all resolutions and discussions relied on the Madrid peace formula and the controls of the peace process as agreed at this conference.

Dr. al-Baz said that if certain fraternal Arab countries believe that it is safer to convene a second Madrid conference, we have no objection, even though we believe there is a practical difficulty in holding a meeting so soon after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, because the countries have nothing new to discuss or propose. He noted that it is possible that an opportunity may present itself to hold this conference after some time, as developments in the peace process warrant. He said that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was not only concerned with acts of violence and terrorism in the region, but was basically and primarily concerned with two issues: First, the peace process and the need to maintain and support it, and second, the issue of security and stability in the Middle East. By security, it is meant the security of all parties and not only one specific party apart from the others. He pointed out that for this reason, it is difficult to conceive of holding a another conference to discuss this as a new issue, because the peace issue was discussed at length at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit and it featured prominently in the statement released at the end of the conference, and signed by Presidents Husni Mubarak and Bill Clinton.

Discussing the peace process on the Syrian track, Dr. al-Baz voiced his hope that the peace process will keep moving and making progress and not be deadlocked or suspended, because this would pose a danger to the regional countries and to security and stability in the future. He said that for this reason President Mubarak called on the Israeli Government not to freeze or suspend negotiations with the Palestinian party or the Syrian and Lebanese parties. We believe in the importance of maintaining momentum and absolutely not obstructing or postponing the peace process.

In response to a question on whether Israel's stance in refusing to resume the peace negotiations with Syria and its refusal to withdraw from Hebron and begin the final status negotiations with the Palestinians constitutes a violation of the spirit of the joint statement released at the end of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, Dr. al-Baz said it is not right to consider the current Israeli stance as final. He pointed out that these stances will change according to developments on the ground and changes in the prevalent climate in Israel, both at the level of the Israeli leadership and people.

Dr. al-Baz said: We expect things to move toward easing the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian territory and population and toward continuing negotiations with fraternal Syria and Lebanon. He said that regarding the Palestinian track, there are three issues: First, lifting

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the suffering on the Palestinian people and easing or completely canceling the restrictions imposed on them in the wake of the recent suicide operations, even if gradually. Second, implementing the agreement reached regarding the transfer of power in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian leadership, especially after the election of the PA chairman and the Palestinian Legislative Council. Third, resumption of the negotiations that have not been completed—the final stage negotiations relating to the final status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—between the Palestinians and Israel. He said that there are also the bilateral negotiations between Israel and Syria and Lebanon to reach a peace agreement.

Egypt: New 'Terrorist' Organization Unearthed, Members Arrested

NC1903151696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1340 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—The state security intelligence forces today succeeded in capturing a new terrorist organization, which tried to execute its criminal plans in various areas of Cairo. The security forces arrested 13 terrorists, who are considered the most dangerous and violent elements, known for being blood-thirsty.

A responsible security source has stated that within the context of stepping up confrontation against fugitive terrorists, the state security intelligence forces intensified their surveillance in all governorates to hunt down fugitive terrorists who carried out terrorist acts in the past.

The security forces succeeded in arresting several dangerous terrorists, including fugitive terrorist Zahr-al-Din Fikri Zahran, in a hideout in the Cairo governorate. He is wanted in case no. 235/95 in connection with his participation in the terrorist Islamic Group's plans to burn down video clubs in Cairo.

The efforts also resulted in the arrest of two fugitives, Yasir Kamal-al-Din al-Sabir and Muhammad al-Sayyid Sha'ban al-Dib, in their hideout in al-Jizah Governorate. The two are wanted in connection with case no. 823/95, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court. It involves the terrorist al-Jihad Organization's military wing moves to assassinate public figures and detonate explosive charges in the Central Region.

Fugitives Ahmad Muhammad Ibrahim al-Kafrawi and Ahmad Muhammad Ibrahim Abu-Dur were arrested in their hideouts in the al-Sharqiyah and al-Gharbiyah governorates. They are wanted in connection with case no. 193/95, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court. It involves a plan by the military wing of the terrorist al-Jihad Organization/the Vanguards of Conquest to attempt to overthrow the regime through gang warfare and procuring large quantities of weapons and explosives.

The efforts also resulted in the arrest of fugitives Khalaf Mustafa Hasan Satuhi and 'Isam Muhammad Yasin Sayyid in their hideout in the Bani Suwayf Governorate. They are wanted in connection with case no. 3941 of 1995, jurisdiction of the administrative section of the Bani Suwayf police station. It involves the attempt to revive the activity of the terrorist Islamic Group's military wing in Bani Suwayf and planning to carry out acts of violence and assassinations.

The security efforts also led to the arrest of runaway Sayyid Abu-al-Sa'ud Ahmad Salhin in his hideout in the Suhaj Governorate.

He is wanted in connection with case no. 14/95, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court. It involves terrorist leader Mahmud al-Sayyid Salim's move to revive the activity of the terrorist Islamic Group's military wing in Suhaj and planning to carry out political assassinations.

Runaway Wahid Sulayman al-Sayyid Nada was also arrested in his hideout in the Dumyat Governorate. He is wanted in connection with case no. 839/94, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court. It concerns the Repudiation and Renunciation Group members' move to blackmail and encroach on citizens in Dumyat Governorate.

The efforts also resulted in the arrest of fugitive Najah 'Abd-al-Mun'im Ramadan Muhammad in his hideout in the Port Said Governorate. He is wanted in connection with case no. 174/96, jurisdiction of the administrative section of Port Said's suburban police. It concerns the al-Jihad Organization members' plan to assassinate State Security Detective officers.

The security monitoring agency operations stretched to cover and watch the moves of fugitive terrorists abroad and the intention by some of them to return to the country using disguises and pseudo names to oversee and participate in carrying out terrorist operations inside the country.

The State Security Detective forces managed to arrest three terrorists as they tried to enter the country. One of them is fugitive convict Hasan 'Abd-al-'Al, who was sentenced to life at hard labor in connection with case no. 745/92, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court. It involves incidents that took place in al-Iman Mosque in al-Suways and the murder of a police officer.

The second is fugitive Ibrahim Ahmad Ibrahim Duban, who had procured a quantity of dynamite for use in

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causing explosions in the Central Region, the subject of case no. 412/86, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court.

The third fugitive is al-Sayyid Muhammad Ahmad Sulayman, who is wanted in connection with case no. 192/93 concerning the terrorist al-Fath Vanguards organization, jurisdiction of the Higher State Security Court.

Legal procedures have been taken against the arrested terrorist leaders to refer them to the judicial investigating authorities.

The security agencies are still pursuing their operations in line with devised plans to strike terrorist hotbeds and cells nationwide and arrest runaway criminal elements inside the country and terrorists directed from abroad.

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Turabi on Hamas, Sharm al-Shaykh Summit

NC1903202596 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 11 Mar 96 p 12

[Interview With Sudanese Islamic National Front Leader Hasan al-Turabi by Samih Sa'b in Khartoum; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sa'b] What is Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]?

[Al-Turabi] Hamas is a Palestinian trend that has its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood movement. It includes other cultural trends which have all blended in Hamas. After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority [PA] in the territories, which are still occupied, and with the presence of Hamas abroad, those who have remained inside [the occupied territories] have been obliged to try to rectify this situation they do not accept. Like a country under the rule of an imperialist power, they rally against this situation. Some have contested the [Palestinian Council] elections as independents, while others have joined other trends. But Hamas abroad has remained loyal to its original stance. It has not recognized the Israeli presence, accepting nothing short of an Arab Muslim Palestine. Hamas abroad has realized that stances, circumstances, and necessities have changed, but it has not transformed these developments into conflicts and struggles as happens when political and cultural movements split.

The struggling military wing, known as the "'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalion" is a branch of the original Hamas. It includes Hamas elements who have been obliged to work on this situation in the occupied areas, with its security and political restrictions.

[Sa'b] One can see that a trend within Hamas supports the suicide operations, while another trend says we support the PA and will surrender our weapons. What is the secret of this contradiction?

[Al-Turabi] It is the same story. The trend that has adjusted to reality, such as the Oslo Accord, although it does not accept it, has kept away from any military activity against the remaining Israeli presence and avoided a clash with the PA. The other Hamas is not fighting the PA, but is continuing its operations against the Israeli presence. These operations are a tit-for-tat for Israel's operations, in which it assassinates Islamic Jihad and Hamas leaders and allows its elements to attack with impunity the Ibrahimi Mosque and elsewhere. This is an interaction between aggression and responding to aggression.

[Sa'b] From where does Hamas receives its orders?

[Al-Turabi] I do not believe it receives its orders from anyone. In the past it was close to the trend of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East. Naturally, Sudan distanced itself sometime ago from this organic relationship. But Hamas has maintained this link. It has always had its own political stances, even before it reached this phase. Now I consider it an independent movement that takes no orders from brothers in Jordan, Egypt, and neighboring Arab countries.

[Sa'b] Therefore, there are two trends within Hamas, one trend that deals within the boundaries of reality imposed on the ground and the other trend that continues operations?

[Al-Turabi] Yes, but both trends are organically linked to the Islamic organizations of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East. The issue now is the PA's stance toward Hamas in general, although Hamas is not fighting the PA and both sides have agreed not to confront each other. However, will Arab countries and governments adopt similar stances toward Islamic movements which are not confronting them, but are only content with expressing their views? I hope this will never happen, because if it happens, the conflict will intensify.

[Sa'b] Have you undertaken mediation between Hamas and the PA?

[Al-Turabi] Naturally. I attribute my mediation efforts to my very old acquaintance with Yasir 'Arafat, which dates back to the fifties. I met him outside the Arab world. He was a representative of Arab students and I was a representative of Muslim students in Prague for the communist-controlled World Student Union. We were more active because we were more experienced in student activity than his delegation, which came from Egypt, and we were more proficient in the English

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language. Since then we have become friends, meeting everywhere. I have built my relationship only with intellectual Hamas [hamas al-fikriyah] because I do not come from the roots of the Muslim Brotherhood. The first agreement (between Hamas and the PLO) was held, but the Oslo accord finished it because of the secret negotiations [between the PLO and Israel]. We tried to gather the two sides another time, but they were unable to meet in Sudan because of Arab policies toward Sudan. They met in Cairo and agreed on a minimum program for the relations between them. I am still sending messages here and there and they reach brother Yasir and the brothers in Hamas.

[Sa'b] Have you carried out contacts after the recent bombings in Israel?

[Al-Turabi] Not after the recent operations, but I have continued to send messages that relations should not become tense between a Palestinian and a Palestinian. I am afraid that international pressure will force the Palestinian government, which has not ruled its country yet, to strike at fundamentalist movements as is happening in other Arab countries. Will this make the Palestinian Government independent or semi-independent? There is no real independence in the Arab world. This will mean a conflict, which we see in some places in the Arab world, especially in the Arab Maghreb. I do not want Arab resources, which are already few and meager, to be sapped further.

[Sa'b] Dr. al-Turabi, is this type of suicide operation in Israel encouraging?

[Al-Turabi] This type of operation is meaningless if it is meant to achieve a political goal. Such operations are senseless because they cannot change the political regime they oppose. For instance, an attempt to assassinate a head of state will not succeed, because he will be replaced by someone else and many of that group's supporters will be wiped out in the ensuing reaction. I am convinced only to resist regimes that leave no doors open for freedom. This is the essence of freedom as known in the West. If the West likes something, it calls it the resistance, and if it does not, it calls it something else. Should they succeed and the West approves of it, the West will call it a revolution. Should it succeed but the West not like it, the West will call it a coup d'etat. I believe that freedom will eventually prevail. Any regime that restricts and stifles freedom through repression and imprisoning must be resisted, but individuals should not be targeted. If what they are trying is to completely alter the situation in Arab Palestine, this cannot be achieved by killing one or ten people. I believe that the people in Hamas want to stop the assassinations of some of their leaders by the Israeli security agencies. They are taking an eye for an eye. If this really is the situation, I can understand it. However, if there is another political goal, these operations will not promote it.

[Sa'b] Have these operations noticeably obstructed the peace process?

[Al-Turabi] Some Palestinians— regardless of my view of the agreement reached— have completely surrendered to their fate and are committed to their course. Another group has made no commitments and therefore cannot be accused of repudiating promises they have not made. Worse still, this group kills Israeli individuals without trial or detention, just as the Israelis do. One bad deed does not justify another. These principles prompt a desire for revenge in kind. These operations will not change the political situation, even though they are carried out in self-defense. Self-defense may end up in killing the attacker, particularly because the other party has killed people in mosques, streets, hotels, and their homes.

[Sa'b] What would you say to the Sharm al-Shaykh summit that will meet on Wednesday [13 March] and in which U.S. President Bill Clinton and European and Middle Eastern heads of state will participate to bolster the peace process and confront the so-called terrorism?

[Al-Turabi] First of all, this summit is motivated by the elections in these countries. Rivals in these elections want to win every vote. The Arabs in general, not to mention the Palestinians, have no voice worth mentioning. The forces whose support these people compete for and who control the media in the United States and in the region, are well known. I fear that the term terrorism my be used—this is a media term because these same people are called freedom fighters in other countries—to try to eliminate any Islamic trend, even cultural societies, books, or blind preachers in mosques. I never rule out this possibility. The promoters of the conference may use this favorable opportunity to start a campaign not against certain individuals but against the roots from which these self-defense fighters emerge. This approach is stupid because people who may not be religious may be patriotic. In Europe, after the collapse of political parties, local nationalistic tendencies emerged. This happened in Italy, Ireland, and Scotland. Man everywhere resists. This is natural in human beings. This approach is stupid. Their attempts will destroy the ties between the leaders and their people, between the Arab leaders and the Arab and Muslim peoples, and in the entire region. This summit is not rational or sober. It is not a place for objective dialogue or the analysis of phenomena.

[Sa'b] Do you see this summit as an escalation of the confrontation with the strict Islamists?

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[Al-Turabi] First, this summit is motivated by the elections and, second, it seeks a confrontation with Islam as a whole, the Islam which produces both extremists and moderates. They want neither extremists nor moderates. They want to uproot both. If they eliminate them, other things will motivate the people. In the past there were leftist Palestinian movements trained by Bader Meinhoff in Germany. The Red Brigades emerged in Italy and the Red Army in Japan. These movements killed, bombed, and attacked in Europe. They must realize that human nature will not change.

Sudan: SPLA's Garang Announces Beginning of War in Northern Sudan

AB1903170196 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 19 Mar 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, SPLA, say they've launched a new phase in their 12-year-old struggle against the Khartoum government. According to a statement issued yesterday, Operation Black Fox began on Sunday [17 March] with a surprise attack on a Sudanese Government battalion. On the line to Nairobi, Khadria Ahmed asked the SPLA spokesman, George Garang, what was different about this particular operation.

[Begin recording] [Garang] The Operation Black Fox is the first phase of the war in northern Sudan, so we can now (?probably) say the war in the north has begun. This is an opportunity for those patriots in northern Sudan to join in the war of liberation, and you will remember last year, we formed what we called New Sudan Brigade. That is to allow people in the north to participate effectively in the war in northern Sudan.

[Ahmed] And what sort of response have you got so far from people within northern Sudan to the launching of Operation Black Fox?

[Garang] We got enormous responses (?last year). There are people get[illegible] into our [word indistinct], supporting us intellectually, financially, [and] materially.

[Ahmed] Have you carried out any sort of action since Operation Black Fox came into being?

[Garang] The first phase is the capture of (Koriabus), and we are now marching toward (Marban) and (Kurmugiza).

[Ahmed] Now, you are claiming to have captured (Koriabus), but you are making it sound pretty important. It doesn't sound like a very, very significant area to me.

[Garang] (Koriabus) is a strategic place. It is between (Marban) and (Kurmug). It is a range of mountains. It is a place that has been [word indistinct] for quite a long time, and you know in a press release we said the whole battalion of the enemy was completely annihilated and the way is now open for us to march through (Kurmug) and (Marban). That makes it very important indeed, and it is the first success of our operation since Black Fox started....

[Ahmed, interrupting] Even though.....

[Garang, continuing] It is in southern Blue Nile. It is under the command of Governor (Mali Zaggar) and the operational command of Commander (John Karwuzon).

[Ahmed] Now, the southern Blue Nile area in itself might be very important but surely, capturing a tiny part of it is not significant?

[Garang] The mere fact that it might not be on your map does not make it insignificant. It is a very big garrison commanded by a major general.

[Ahmed] Are your forces coming out of Ethiopia to launch attacks?

[Garang] We have been in the area, in southern Blue Nile since 1985. In fact, we have never left the area quite a long time ago. [sentence as heard]

[Ahmed] And so, so, so, you don't have your forces coming in from Ethiopia at all?

[Garang] We are fighting inside Sudan. We are in southern Blue Nile. We are now in Darfur. We are in southern Sudan and hopefully, very soon we shall be in the north Papa. [end recording]

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Bahrain

Bahrain: 3 Incendiary Bombs Thrown at School; 1 Injured

JN2003141596 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1340 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Mar (WAKH) — The Bahraini Education Ministry strongly denounced the acts of sabotage that aim to jeopardize students' lives, terrorize them, obstruct their classes, and destroy their future.

The ministry stressed that it will take all the required and necessary measures to protect the students and provide for them a secure academic atmosphere.

This came during a visit paid by Education Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Fadil, accompanied by Dr. Hamad 'Ali al-Sulayti, the Education Ministry under secretary, today to the Samahij Elementary-Preparatory School for Boys. During the visit, the minister was acquainted with the effects of the act of sabotage that had been carried out by a number of persons from outside the school. They had thrown three incendiary bombs at various places at the school during the recess. One of the bombs caused burns to the foot and leg of student 'Ali Hasan 'Abd-al-Jabbar, a 9 year old in the fourth elementary grade. He was immediately rushed to the al-Sulaymaniyah Hospital, where he was given first aid. He is still receiving treatment at the burn center.

The two other bombs hit other places at the school but caused no injuries among students.

In a separate development, the Bahraini education minister visited the burn center at the al-Sulaymaniyah medical center. He inquired about the student's health condition, wishing him speedy recovery so as to continue his classes.

Bahrain: 2 Employees Injured in Manama Hotel Bombing

LD1903220696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
2140 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manamah, 19 Mar — It was announced in Bahrain tonight that a strong explosion took place at 1830 at the Baisan Hotel in Manamah. The Gulf News Agency said that the explosion was the result of an explosive device which was placed at the bottom of the staircase in the lower ground floor and which caused cracks in the walls and the smashing of glass of the windows of the accounts room which is located near the staircase. The explosion led to the injury of two employees of the hotel as a result of flying glass.

Bahrain: Details of Bombing of Manama Hotel Given

NC1903212696 Paris AFP in English
2108 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Report by V.S. Vinkatraman]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Manama, March 19 (AFP) — A bomb ripped through a hotel in central Manama on Tuesday [19 March], wounding two Indian nationals, officials said.

The home-made bomb exploded in the Baisan International hotel, an official said, adding that two people were "lightly wounded by shattering glass."

"The authorities have opened an investigation," he added.

The bomb was placed at the entrance to the health club of the three-star hotel, which is located just minutes away from government headquarters in Manama and the capital's diplomatic area.

It was the ninth attack in the Gulf island state and the third Manama hotel bombing since the start of the year.

Guests were evacuated from the hotel while all entrances except one were sealed off by security forces. Witnesses said the blast shattered the doors and windows at the front of the hotel, and ripped off stair railings.

One witness said an Indian woman was taken to hospital with injuries after the explosion. "She panicked when the bomb went off because she had left her son in the swimming pool. She was screaming and bleeding as she ran out of the hotel," he said. The son was not hurt.

A European expatriate, who was at the hotel bar when the bomb exploded, said: "I heard a loud blast and thought the whole world was falling apart.

"I ran out, there was heavy smoke and confusion everywhere. It took me a few minutes to realise that I had survived a bomb attack."

An employee at the Baisan hotel, which is owned by the Dadabhai group of companies, told AFP: "This is unnerving. The number of bomb blasts around the country seems to be on the increase. To be honest I am scared, although we are being assured by our bosses."

A worker at one of the many other nearby hotels said the latest explosion "has sent a shock wave across the hotel industry."

"Until now this area has been safe, but no more. We have to increase security in and outside hotels. Guests will not feel safe anymore." [passage omitted]

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Bahrain's interior and defence ministers met early Tuesday amid mounting calls for tougher government action against the protestors.

On Saturday, Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' suggested that "exceptional measures" could be taken following the continuing demonstrations and attacks.

The army said in January it was ready to install martial law to crack down on unrest.

(An exiled opposition group urged Bahrainis to hold peaceful demonstrations on Wednesday to protest the government's "repressive measures."

(The group, calling itself the People's Movement for the Constitution, added in a statement sent to Nicosia that "jihad (holy war) is the only language the government understands.")

Bahrain: Security Heightened After Student Protests

NC1903171496 Paris AFP in English 1401 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, March 19 (AFP) — Schools in Bahrain were placed under tight security on Tuesday [19 March] after anti-government demonstrations by students in Shiite Moslem areas of the country, residents said.

The protests, which started on Sunday, resulted in the arrest of scores of students in government-run secondary schools, residents in the trouble spots of al-Diraz, Jamrah, Jidd Hafs, Sanabis and Sitrah told AFP.

"We do not know the exact numbers but at least 100 students may have been taken in," said one al-Diraz inhabitant, who asked not to be named. "What have these young people done? Why should they be arrested?"

Many students stayed away from classes on Monday to protest against the arrest of their colleagues, residents added.

The government issued no immediate comment about the reported protests.

Private schools — including Japanese, British and American institutions — continued to function normally, with no extra security in evidence.

Al-Diraz, Jannusan, Jamrah, Jidd Hafs, Sanabis and Sitrah— all Shiite dominated areas — remained tense after a series of protests and firebombings last week.

Seven Bangladeshi workers were killed when their restaurant was attacked by firebombers in Sitrah on Thursday. It came a day after an attack on a restaurant in Jidd Hafs, although no injuries were reported in that incident.

The Interior Ministry said seven people have been arrested and face charges in connection with the Sitrah bombing.

The U.S. Embassy in Bahrain warned American citizens on Monday that the firebombers aimed at killing Asian and Western expatriates.

The British embassy has advised its expatriate citizens to avoid sensitive areas of the archipelago, but an embassy telephone hotline says the situation is in hand.

"The general situation is under control and there is no need for visitors to cancel their visits to Bahrain," a recorded message at the embassy said.

Unrest erupted in December 1994 after the Sunni Moslem-led government arrested a Shiite cleric who demanded the restoration of parliament which was suspended in 1975.

At least 21 people have been killed since the violence started.

Bahrain: Daily Says Government To 'Liquidate' 'Terrorist Cliques'

JN2003100696 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0745 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Mar (WAKH)— Bahraini newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ strongly condemned yesterday's explosion at the Baisan Hotel. The paper says: There is no doubt that the terrorist cliques became professional in committing crimes and carrying out sabotage acts. These cliques' main objective is to destroy the national economy and tourism facilities and scare innocent and defenseless people.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ adds that such criminal acts are condemned and despised by all popular and official quarters throughout the world, which has entered into an inevitable and decisive confrontation against the epidemic of terrorism aimed only at encroaching on people's security and their vital interests.

The paper expresses its deep regret that the terrorist cliques have not learned from the failure of all their previous efforts to harm Bahrain's reputation and its prominent economic position in the region and the world. They also have not learned that the country's economy continues to move ahead, determined to increase income levels and national production rates.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ concludes that the terrorist cliques will continue to fail, their criminal schemes will be aborted, and the homeland will continue the march

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of construction and development. Thanks to the unity between the people and their leadership, Bahrain will confront the scheme of terrorism and sabotage, liquidate its dens, and protect the gains of the citizens and the homeland's cultural achievements.

Bahrain: Amir Issues Decrees Approving Penal Code Amendments

JN2003125396 Manama Bahrain Radio Network in Arabic 0930 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Law No. 10 of 1996, as decreed by His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain, was published in the official gazette today. It amends some of the provisions of the Penal Code, which was issued by Decree Law No. 15 of 1976.

The decree reads that the text of Paragraph 1 of Article 185 of the Penal Code, issued by Decree Law No. 15 of 1976, shall be replaced by the following text:

Perpetrators of the following crimes shall stand trial before a court, the formation and procedures of which shall be based on an amiri decree:

A. Crimes enshrined in Articles No. 112, 184, 277, and 281 of the Penal Code.

B. Crimes included in Articles No. 220, 221, 333, and 336-340 of the Penal Code if the attack is against one of the persons mentioned in Article No. 107 of the Penal Code or their representatives while carrying out his duties.

C. Crimes enshrined in Article 18 of Decree Law No. 18 of 1967 regarding explosives, weapons, and ammunitions.

D. Crimes linked to the crimes mentioned in the previous articles.

Also, today's official gazette publishes Decree No. 14 for 1996, issued by His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain. The decree amends some provisions of Decree No. 7 for 1976 regarding the formation and procedures of the court enshrined in Article 185 of the Penal Code.

The decree reads that the text of Paragraph 1 of Article 1 of Decree No. 7 of 1976 on the formation and procedures of the court stipulated in Article 185 of the Penal Law shall be replaced by the following text:

The Higher Court of Appeal, which consists of three judges, shall be the competent court to look into the crimes enshrined in Article 185 of the Penal Code.

Bahrain: Daily Praises Council Decision To Amend Penal Code

JN2003123196 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0740 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 20 Mar (WAKH) — The Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM says that the Consultative Council's unanimous decision to amend the provisions of the penal code yesterday was an expression of a larger popular desire to take steps to deter riots and subversion, ward off the repercussions of such acts on public and private interests, and prevent the homeland from being dragged into a dangerous situation.

The paper says these measures are necessary to keep our homeland from getting lost, as has been the case with other states that got lost in the darkness of the unknown and are still unable to find a way out.

The paper adds: Prior measures to combat such major crimes were not sufficient to deter these people from going too far. These groups were not deterred after a year and a half of the disturbances and chaos. Instead, they continued their daily escalation of the situation and their disgusting crimes that spread terror and fear in the hearts of citizens and residents.

The paper points out that the exceptional measure to expand the jurisdiction of the special courts that hear all forms of crimes against national security was a popular demand. It is a legal measure that has been taken by all states where law prevails in order to protect lives and property, which is a state responsibility that cannot be shirked.

AL-AYYAM concludes: Expeditious adjudication of crimes aimed at undermining security and stability, arousing the fear of citizens and residents, and shaking the pillars of national economy will entrench security and stability in the country. The groups responsible for the murders, riots, and subversion have gone too far with their shameful acts, which have begun to target people's lives since they have failed to terrorize them by burning and vandalizing personal and public property.

Bahrain: Interior Minister Receives Phone Call From Jordan's PM

JN1903200696 Manama Bahrain Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah, the minister of interior affairs, this evening received a phone call from 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, prime minister, foreign minister, and defense minister of the fraternal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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During the phone call, al-Kabariti reiterated the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's support for the measures the State of Bahrain has taken to counter violence and acts of terrorism and to preserve its security and stability. They also exchanged views on several issues of interest to the State of Bahrain and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Authorities Investigate 'Huge Fire' in Weapons Market

LD1903191196 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A huge fire broke out last night at the weapons market in the Mubarakiyah area. Fire brigade and rescue teams rushed to the scene and were able to control the fire, thanks to God, which destroyed a number of trading shops.

The competent authorities at the Interior Ministry are continuing their investigations to identify the causes of the fire.

Kuwait: No Arms Contract Signed at Meeting With French

BR1903150896 Paris LES ECHOS in French 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Kuwaiti-French Committee: Good Intentions But No Contract"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "We are telling the Kuwaiti authorities that they can count on France to strengthen our friendship and to expand the economic ties between the two countries," Jean Arthuis declared yesterday. Arriving that very morning from Israel and Gaza, the French economy minister chaired the twice-yearly meeting of the Kuwaiti-French committee, held this time in the emirate.

Given that this type of meeting is the occasion to announce major contracts or the creation of new structures, yesterday's committee meeting visibly did not allow the two sides to conclude the arms contract for (sea-to-sea) missiles worth around $150 million (more than 800 million francs [Fr]) to equip the French patrol vessels which Kuwait has bought. In this deal the French are competing with the British. The contract "is the subject of expert examination," was all that the minister declared. In January Defense Minister Charles Millon had already discussed this deal with senior Kuwaiti leaders.

Trade at Too Modest Levels

Despite its commitment in the coalition, France is having a hard time gaining a place in Kuwait's civilian and military market, which is largely dominated by the Anglo-Saxons. "We want to develop our trade and we know that the fleet needs to be equipped. I have come to express forcefully the health of the French economy and its technological capabilities, as well as the interest which France accords to the signing of a certain number of contracts," Jean Arthuis added.

At the end of this meeting, the two parties nonetheless signed an agreement to promote mutual investments and to develop bilateral trade.

This trade, in the civilian area, remains relatively modest. Last year, French exports to the emirate amounted to Fr3.8 billion, compared with imports of less than Fr1 billion from Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Yemeni Delegation Arrives in Riyadh for Border Talks

LD2003134796 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A delegation for the Yemeni side in the Saudi-Yemeni joint committee to define measures to delineate the rest of the borders led by His Excellency 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal, deputy prime minister and planning minister in the Yemeni Republic, arrived at noon today in Riyadh to resume the second round of talks which began in Sanaa on the 10th to the 11th [as heard] of the 10th month 1416 A.H. [27-28 February 1996] [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Diplomatic Source Rules Out Relations With Israel

LD1903183096 Tripoli JANA in English 1741 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, al Rabia [Mar] 19, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY — A Saudi diplomatic source has ruled out the establishment of any relations between Saudia [Saudi Arabia] and the Israeli enemy. In a statement published in Saudia today, the diplomat said the establishment of relations with the Israelis will not take place in the foreseeable future.

Saudi Arabia: Summit Impact Seen as Both 'Positive and Negative'

MM1903162096 Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 14 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed article: "Sharm al-Shaykh Summit: Strong Attendance, Unknown Results!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] All those who did or did not attend the peacemakers' summit agree that there is only

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one road to peace, and that there is no disagreement on the basic reasons for which many conferences and open and secret meetings have been held. However, the current conference is apparently aimed at clearing hurdles, since it wants to mobilize the world's superpowers against terrorism, but without an evenhanded regional approach to establish firm foundations, making it look more like a media event than a summary and analysis of the problem with proposed practical solutions.

And while the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] endorses peace and support its steps, it also stands for right and against arbitrary or rash actions against others and everything that leads to terrorism in its various guises and by ancient or modern methods. The speech delivered at this conference on behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques reaffirmed support for a just and lasting peace in accordance with the [UN] Security Council resolutions, called for the resumption of the Madrid conference, and warned against giving a free hand to mete out mass punishment in the occupied territories.

This is the view of any Arab citizen. The region will remain subject to political upheavals and the emergence of the violence phenomenon in view of the fact that the truth is lacking or concealed, and because, in sensitive and critical operations, one should not use double standards or magnify small incidents.

The Palestinians have suffered. They have accepted peace at the expense of their basic principles on the premise that it would make coexistence and construction more acceptable. Israel's defiance of peace and the fact that it views it from the position of the decisionmaker in the region, refusing to move the settlements or stop their expansion, subjecting the Palestinians to economic sanctions by closing their borders with the world, not understanding their requirements, and ignoring their essential needs, are the reasons behind the incidents and clashes between the two sides, which, in view of the Palestinian reality and in the absence of successful solutions, are normal.

With regard to Syria and a comprehensive peace, the attraction continues. However, getting rid of the implementation problem and agreeing on broad lines with no room for explanation or interpretation has become an issue as broad as the problem and its developments. As long as Israel does not offer a consistent view supported by concrete commitments, peace will remain at an impasse, and current and future gatherings to settle the issue may be useless if there is no total clarity and no options which could be used to close the file.

The Kingdom's view of peace and the fact that it goes beyond its superficial meaning and constants puts it in line with the Arab position, namely that a comprehensive solution must not be at the expense of fragmentation or division. The states sponsoring peace are aware of their responsibilities with regard to reaffirming what they previously approved at the Security Council, and according to which they have formulated their policies. Terrorism should not be a priority item in the peace issue, lest there be clashes due to the nonimplementation of those principles or the lack of commitment to them. Israel, which has relied on the political process and the ability to turn events to its advantage, has succeeded in making the recent bombings a turning point which brought the world's leaders to Sharm al-Shaykh. Perhaps this summit will have both a negative and positive impact on the peace process, and its positive elements, which will include everyone, will not let Israel define the region and marginalize the others in its orbit.

Saudi Arabia: Foreign Minister Holds Talks With UK's Aitken

LD1903193596 Riyadh SPA in English 1732 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 19 Mar — His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, received in his office today the British parliamentary delegation led by Jonathan Aitken, which is currently visiting the kingdom. Issues of common interest to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Britain were examined during the meeting.

Ambassador Dr. Khalid Ibrahim al-Jundan, head of the western affairs department [at the Foreign Ministry], and Dr. Muhammad Raja' al-Husayni, minister plenipotentiary at the embassy of the custodian of the two holy mosques to London, attended the meeting.

Yemen

Yemen: Salih Meets Egyptian Parliamentary Delegation

JN1903135496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, today received brother Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur, speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, who is currently leading a ranking parliamentary delegation on a tour of our country. Surur conveyed to the brother president a message from his brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak on the historic bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen them, in addition to the

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regional, Arab, and international developments, particularly the outcome of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

The two sides reviewed many issues and developments that concern the two countries and the Arab nation, as well as ways to reinforce Arab solidarity and common Arab action and to promote bilateral cooperation in the interest of both fraternal people.

The president praised the continuous development of bilateral relations, noting that these relations are historic and fraternal and were baptized by the chaste blood shed by the sons of both people. The president stressed our country's concern about developing bilateral relations, noting the importance of activating the work of the Higher Yemeni-Egyptian Committee to develop cooperation and to meet the aspirations of both friendly people.

The brother president reiterated our country's principled stand, condemning all forms of terrorism and violence and supporting the peace process on the basis of a just and comprehensive peace that will restore legitimate Arab rights and end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territory in Palestine, Golan, and southern Lebanon.

The meeting was attended Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the House of Representatives; 'Abdallah Ahmad Ghanim, minister of legal affairs and the House of Representatives affairs; 'Ali Abu-Hulayqah; member of the House of Representatives; the delegation accompanying the speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly; and 'Adil Subhi, Egyptian ambassador to our country.

[Sanaa Radio in Arabic at 1200 GMT on 19 March reports that a round of talks was held between the speakership of the House of Representatives, led by Speaker Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, and the Egyptian delegation, led by Ahmad Fathi Surur. The radio adds that "the talks dealt with ways to develop bilateral parliamentary relations and current Arab issues, particularly the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island, al-Hanish al-Kabir."]

Yemen: House Speaker Meets With Egyptian Counterpart

JN2003103696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in English 1930 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Official Yemeni-Egyptian parliamentary talks were held at the parliament building, presided over by the speaker of the parliament, Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, and the speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, Dr. Fathi Surur.

During the talks, the parliament speaker underpinned the significance of Yemeni-Egyptian relations and said the Yemeni people hold high regards for Egypt's role during the Yemeni revolution. He also reviewed the stages of developments of the Yemeni democratic experience, saying the multiparty system has become the essence of the democratic experience in Yemen.

Shaykh al-Ahmar noted that there is a need to increase the exchange of visits between the two sides to remove any stereotypes and the false image painted by the secessionists about Yemen amidst the Egyptian public opinion. The speaker of the parliament confirmed that the security and stability of the Red Sea is a vital issue for all the states overlooking the Red Sea and for the whole world as well.

He pointed out to the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni Great al-Hanish Island and the threat it poses to the safety and security of the area. He also noted that the significance of the role of parliamentarians can play in the process of restoring the solidarity of the Arab fold.

For his part, the Egyptian speaker of the People's Assembly, Dr. Fathi Surur, praised the Yemeni-Egyptian relations and said his visit to Yemen constituted a new addition in the level of developing relations between both countries. He expressed admiration for the progress in the Yemeni economy, represented in the growth in the economy and a reduction of inflation and cutting down of the budget deficit. A number of officials from both sides attended the official Yemeni-Egyptian talks.

Yemen: House Team Holds Talks With Egyptian Assembly Team

JN1903184896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A House of Representatives delegation, headed by House speaker brother Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, held a round of talks with an Egyptian People's Assembly delegation, headed by Assembly speaker brother Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur, at the House building this morning.

Talks dealt with ways to enhance parliamentary relations between the two countries and current Arab issues, particularly Eritrea's aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. Cordial speeches were also exchanged between the House speaker and the Egyptian People's Assembly speaker.

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Yemen: Cooperation Protocol Signed With Egyptian Assembly Team

JN2003103296 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] A parliamentary cooperation protocol was signed today by the House of Representatives and the Egyptian People's Assembly. The protocol calls for exchanging visits by parliamentary delegations, coordinating both sides' positions on issues of mutual interest, training parliamentary cadres, and exchanging publications related to parliamentary activities.

The protocol was signed for our country by Muhammad al-Khadim al-Wajih, member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the Yemeni-Egyptian Friendship Society, and for the Egyptian side by brother Ahmad Hammadi, People's Assembly official and chairman of the Egyptian-Yemeni Friendship Society.

Yemen: Legislators Endorse Draft State Budget

JN2003115896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in English 1930 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The parliament voted on the state's 1996 general budget and independent budgets for the economic units. In a session held this morning and presided over by Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, the speaker of the parliament, the state's general budget received the majority of the votes of 150 parliament members. Fifty-three parliament members voted against, and 11 had walked out before the vote.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani, who attended the parliament's session, said the national economic reforms program was a necessity imposed by realities and is required for the deep-rooted transformation needed for building a modern Yemeni state and a democratic political system.

He said there is no choice but a start of implementing the program, which, he said, was prepared on the basis of sound scientific research. The prime minister talked about the results of the reforms program and said the first phase has actually regained confidence on the nation's economy.

The prime minister said the suffering of the low-income families who constitute most of the population of Yemen is a subject of continued concern and is being paid all the attention it deserves by the political leadership, led by the President of the republic, General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

The approved budget is put at more than 155 billion rial, while expenditures exceeded 181 billion rial, with a recorded deficit of about 26 billion rial. The parliament members also included a number of conditions to be implemented by the government, including some suggestions for reforms in government agencies. The parliament members also asked that the budget should be submitted within the legal timeframe for next year.

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Iraq: Clandestine Radio Reports Saddam's 3d Son-in-Law Dead

JN1903202496 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our special sources reported that [Jamal Mustafa] the third son-in-law of the tyrant and husband of his daughter Hala died in the hospital eight days after sustaining wounds during his participation in the attack against Husayn Kamil, his two brothers, and his father on 23 February.

The sources added that an armed group travelling in six Mercedes cars attacked people at a ceremony for reading the Opening Chapter of the Koran to mark the death of Jamal Mustafa in the village of al-'Awjah in early March. Our sources revealed that the attack by followers of Husayn Kamil on those attending the ceremony for Jamal Mustafa resulted in the death of 20 people, who were senior officials and confidantes of the tyrant. The same sources affirmed that the acts of physical liquidation within the ruling family and the tyrant's entourage are on the increase, and that they are being conducted secretly, expeditiously, and at a lightning speed. [words indistinct] stated that the tyrant himself [Saddam Husayn] could be killed any time.

Iraq: Saddam Visits al-Dur Subdistrict, Addresses People

JN1903212196 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, greeted our glorious people from the balcony of the al- Dur subdistrict building. Glorious men and women went to the streets in a large carnival, united by the love of the leader and the homeland. The moment his excellency raised his blessed hand to great them, the masses raised their voices in praise of the helmsman who will lead them to the shores of safety so that the ship of great Iraq might anchor on the shores of prosperity with God's help and thanks to the wisdom and courage of the beloved leader.

Earlier, his excellency met with the al-Dur subdistrict administrative officer and heard a briefing on the plantation campaign and the effective contribution of the people of the subdistrict aimed at realizing exceptional success in this campaign. In this regard, his excellency said: When we say that the conditions are good, this means that the district and subdistrict have prepared themselves to cross to the other side with the Iraqis.

His excellency also discussed the effective contributions of the able and the well-to-do from our people to help their brothers in the crossing phase.

During his presence in the al-Dur subdistrict administrative's office, his excellency received many phone calls from our people in which they expressed their happiness for meeting with the beloved leader. In other calls, the people presented problems facing them. His excellency ordered that the callers be summoned and he heard directly from them their grievances and problems. His excellency ordered that the necessary measures be taken to tackle these problems.

Present to greet his excellency were the governor of Salah al-Din and the comrade members of the Salah al-Din Ba'th party branch who are present in al-Dur subdistrict.

In his remarks on the manifestations of patriotism, his excellency said that patriotism is manifested by close affiliation with the people. A country without people is merely a piece of land. He also stressed that the unchanging yardstick of patriotism is that the loaf of bread must not be hoarded.

His excellency, protected by God, toured the subdistrict, greeting the people who gathered and danced in the streets to express their elation with his excellency's blessed visit.

His excellency lunched with his people at these historic moments which express the deep spirit of human relationship between a great leader and a great people.

His excellency was seen off by his sons who praised God to protect the leader and grant him support to build the homeland and defeat its enemies with God's help.

Iraq: Rebels Shoot Down Government Helicopter Over Marshlands

JN1903200396 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A source in the Border Guards of the tyrant's regime admitted that the mujahidin of the marshlands shot down a helicopter belonging to the tyrant's troops. Informed sources in southern Iraq said that a SAM-7 surface-to-air missile hit the helicopter, bringing it down and killing its crewmen.

The sources added that the helicopter was patrolling the area adjacent to 32d parallel in the north of the al-'Amarah Governorate. The regime's helicopters have continued to overfly the marshland areas relentlessly, particularly in the Governorates of al-'Amarah, al-Nasiriyah, and al-Najaf. The helicopters most often went

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beyond the 32d parallel, which marks the start of the air exclusion zone declared in 1992.

The mujahidin shot down more than 11 helicopters in the marshlands of southern Iraq before the declaration of the air exclusion zone there.

Iraq: Army Chief of Staff Escapes Assassination Attempt

JN1903204296 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Southern Iraq—As part of the magnificent victories scored by the heroes of the victorious Badr Corps against the tyrant's troops in the operations code named "The Prince of the Faithful, May God's Peace Be Upon Him," and the escalation in the popular jihad battles, our special sources have asserted that the defeated criminal 'Abd-al-Wahid Shinan Al Ribat, army chief of staff of the regime, suffered an attempt on his life when was in the al- 'Amarah Governorate after the defeat of his troops. The sources added that a group of mujahidin [words indistinct] the criminal when his motorcade passed the main road leading to the governorate premises on 26 February. The sources noted that the attack resulted in the killing of most of the guards of the army chief of staff and several military commanders affiliated with the Saddamist IV Army Corps. Moreover, the attack destroyed several vehicles, including the vehicle of criminal Al Ribat, who survived miraculously, given the fact that his vehicle caught fire.

The criminal was the target of an attack by the mujahidin in 1993 when he was commander of the IV Army Corps [words indistinct]. Then, he sustained wounds to his leg and [words indistinct]. As a result, he was moved to the al-'Amarah Governorate.

Iraq: KDP, Islamic Movement Clash in Halabjah

NC1803170596 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports from Halabjah, clashes flared up at 1600 yesterday between the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] gunmen and the Islamic Movement forces in the city. The clashes, which erupted after a dispute over the ceremony marking the 8th anniversary of the gassing of Halabjah scheduled to be held in the city's public gardens, left three KDP gunmen and one Islamic Movement member dead. The KDP gunmen detained 15 Islamic Movement members and the latter detained 20 KDP members. The clash also left two children and three women dead and a large number of citizens wounded.

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Israel: Peres, Or—Now Not Right Time for Operation in Lebanon

TA1903153796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel will operate with full force and punish any element operating against it from south Lebanon. The remark was made this afternoon by Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister. He stressed that now is not the right time for a wide-scale operation because the media reports about an Israeli intention to carry out an attack have chased the terrorists away from their homes. Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or said earlier: The media did our work for us this time. Udi Segal, our political correspondent, reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] A wide-scale military operation in Lebanon is not on the agenda right now, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres made clear today. His message, however, was unequivocal: Israel will retaliate and strike at the terrorists; it is only a matter of time. This means that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] maintains its past policy of locating specific targets and carrying out pinpoint and effective surgical operations against them. The option of a wide-scale operation is irrelevant at this time, mainly because of the media, the prime minister said.

[Peres] During a commotion is not the time to launch operations. When the north is full of reporters, while the houses of the terrorists stand empty — this is not exactly a situation that invites a military operation. As a rule, I do not believe that we should use news conferences to discuss operations. I can only say that anyone who tries harming the State of Israel will be punished immediately.

[Segal] In fact, Peres is saying that there is no one to take action against because the reports on a possible IDF attack made the terrorists flee from their homes northward.

Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or said today: To a large extent, the media did our work for us.

[Or] We have considered several operations. Presently, however, Hizballah leaders and personnel are leaving the region, so our goal has been attained even without military activity. The noise you, the media, made was enough to scare some of them away. In any event, I know they will be back. Regrettably, we are dealing with ongoing terrorist activity that is really on the rise, and which reached a peak during the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

[Segal] As always, quiet here is relative and temporary. Jerusalem hopes it will stay like that and that the holiday tourism business will not be affected. At the same time, the message the government sends is clear and determined: We have not said our final word yet.

Referring to political restrictions on military activities, the prime minister said: Such restrictions were applied only during the Sharm al-Shaykh conference and President Clinton's visit here. Our correspondent Tal Meckel accompanied the prime minister on his tour of the Tel Nof Air Force base:

[Peres] All the other restrictions have more to do with the situation of the clouds, concentration of forces, dissemination of information, and other considerations. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 19 March adds: "Our correspondent Yaron Kaner reports that the prime minister said that Israel is giving serious consideration to the difficult economic situation faced by the inhabitants of the territories, but any decision regarding concessions on the closure will be made strictly according to security considerations."]

Israel: Peres Receives U.S. Demand To Avoid IDF Action in Lebanon

TA1903181296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration yesterday pressured Israel to avoid a military operation against Hizballah in south Lebanon. This has been learned by our political correspondent Nisim Mish'al. U.S. ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk yesterday called Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and relayed to him a U.S. demand to avoid a military operation in south Lebanon. The ambassador said the United States wants to exhaust all the political moves with Syria in a bid to calm tempers down in the region. Our correspondent has learned of a firm U.S. demand to President al-Asad that he put an end to Hizballah attacks against IDF [Israel Defense Forces] forces in south Lebanon.

Israel: Peres on Restraint in North, Denies Plan To Expel Relatives

TA2003082796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said he has received information that Hizballah in Lebanon is interested in toning down the escalation along the northern border. If restraint is shown in the field, Peres said, we will also act with restraint. The prime minister added that the only solution for the situation in south Lebanon is a political one, within the framework of peace with Syria and Lebanon; however,

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if Israel displays weakness now, it will endanger its northern settlements.

As for the deportation of Islamic activists, Peres said Israel would deport Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists for deterrent purposes. The relatives of activists will not be deported.

Our correspondent Yaron Kaner reports that the prime minister was speaking to new IDF [Israel Defense Forces] recruits at the Tel Hashomer induction center.

Israel: Peres Decided on Deporting Activists, Relatives

TA2003082296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0400 GMT 20 Mar 96

[Studio talk between anchorman Mikha Friedman and political correspondent Udi Segal — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Friedman] Is it possible to deport the relatives of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists — perhaps to Lebanon, as Prime Minister Shim'on Peres would like to do? There are two conflicting reports on the prime minister's table. One report, prepared by the Prime Minister's Office, stipulates that the emergency regulations from the time of the British mandate can be applied to justify deporting the terrorists' relatives, whereas a second opinion prepared by the attorney general doubts whether such measures would be approved by the High Court of Justice.

[Segal] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has already decided in favor of deporting Hamas activists and the relatives of suicide bombers. A legal opinion prepared by his office states that the emergency regulations justify deporting the relatives of Hamas activists. In the past, only the activists themselves, and not their relatives, were expelled. The emergency regulations permit the local military commander to deport any person considered a security risk. Officials at the Prime Minister's Office see this as sufficient basis for deporting the relatives of suicide bombers, on the argument that family members offer the terrorists support and encouragement. This runs completely contrary to the position espoused by Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir, who expressed the assessment that the High Court of Justice would not endorse the deporting of relatives.

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 20 March carries a related report on page 1 by Arieh O'Sullivan, adding that the list of those to be deported "reportedly included the two brothers of Yahya 'The Engineer' 'Ayyash — as an attempt to bury the 'Ayyash myth."]

Political sources have made it clear that the prime minister, despite having said that deportations and house demolitions are the most effective deterrent measures against terrorists, is not planning a mass deportation similar to that of the 415 Hamas activists [in December 1992]. Peres promised to present every deportation request to the cabinet for approval on an individual basis. Apparently, if the deportations are upheld by the court, Peres will ask the cabinet to approve individual deportations. The prime minister clarified that women and children will not be deported.

[Friedman] If I understand correctly, it will not be a mass deportation like the one previously carried out by the government.

[Segal] The prime minister intends to deport specific individuals. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has already stated that his country will not permit Israel to deport Palestinians to Lebanese territory. Past experience shows that such statements are not worth much.

[Friedman] Do we know when the deportations will start?

[Segal] No, this remains unclear. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is still determining whom it will deport. The legal bodies will then have to decide whether the deportations are legal before the actual deportations can be carried out.

[Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew on 20 March in a page 1 report by Hagay Huberman adds that "the deportation of 150 Hamas activists is expected in the very near future." The paper notes that "the defense establishment has drawn conclusions from the 1992 deportation of Hamas activists. One of the conclusions is not to deport all of them to one place but rather to disperse them in a number of locations. The defense establishment has also recommended that the deportations be of an unlimited duration, without any fixed date for the deportees' return. On 18 March, there were false rumors that the deportations had already begun." Huberman adds that "the plan to deport Hamas leaders is being held up because, as yet, no country is willing to accept the deportees. Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt have denied their entry. It remains unclear whether countries in Africa will agree to take the deportees in."]

Israel: House Demolitions Under Way in al-Fawwar; Curfew Imposed

TA2003083096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces demolished the home of Majdi Abu-Wardah a short while ago. Abu-Wardah carried out the first suicide bombing on the No. 18 bus in Jerusalem. The security forces are now

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preparing to destroy the home of Ibrahim al-Sarahinah, who carried out the attack at the Ashqelon junction on the same day. Both houses are located in the al-Fawwar refugee camp near Hebron.

Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] imposed a curfew on the refugee camp and has assembled all its residents on a hill outside the camp.

Israel: Officials Reverse Decision on Entry of 2 PNC Members

TA2003044596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli security officials have reversed their recommendation to allow the Palestinian responsible for the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics back into Israel — this, after he published a statement in favor of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and terror. Muhammad 'Awdah, also known as Abu-Dawud, currently heads the legal committee of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. Several weeks ago, he was granted permission to attend the PNC meeting called to amend the Palestinian Charter and revoke the anti-Israel clauses. The entrance of Layla Khalid was also rejected after she praised the suicide attacks.

The Palestinian Authority has submitted to Israel a request to approve the entry of an additional 37 PNC members currently in Arab states. So far, the defense establishment has granted permission to more than 100 members to attend and barred 18 others.

Israel: Options for Jerusalem Arrangement

TA2003080996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 Mar 96 p A2

[Article by Nadav Shragay: "Proposals for Permanent Arrangement in Jerusalem"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

One Option Cites Five Possibilities for the Transfer of Territory

Maps describing options for a permanent solution in Jerusalem have been sent to Palestinian Authority [PA] officials, including Faysal al-Husayni. One option recognizes Palestinian sovereignty in part of East Jerusalem and the addition of vast areas ('Etzyon Bloc, Ma'ale Adumim, Giv'at Ze'ev, and Betar) to the city's jurisdiction and Israeli sovereignty.

All the options are included in a secret document drafted by a Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies think tank and obtained by HA'ARETZ. The institute deals with possible arrangements in Jerusalem in anticipation of political negotiations.

Among others, the document was sent to Minister Yosi Beilin. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert claims that Beilin handed it over to Ron Pundaq and Ya'ir Hirschfeld, who in turn sent it to PA officials last October with Beilin's knowledge.

Pundaq and Hirschfeld were the men who broke the ground for the Oslo A agreements. For over two years they have been engaged in unofficial contacts with the Palestinians concerning the permanent arrangement.

Beilin, Pundaq, and Hirschfeld categorically deny Olmert's allegations. "Any attempt to establish a connection between us and this document is wrong. Moreover, the document is unacceptable to us," Hirschfeld said.

The option recognizing Palestinian sovereignty over part of East Jerusalem cites five possibilities for a transfer of territory, from the narrowest to the widest:

1. A limited area on the edges of Jerusalem city limits territorially linked to the PA, which the latter would use as its government compound. All other Arab neighborhoods would remain under Israel's sovereignty with functional autonomy.

The possible "edge areas" are Ra's al-'Amud, 'Arab al-Sawahirah, Umm-Lisun [name as transliterated], Sur Bahir, and Umm-Tuba in southeast Jerusalem; the eastern rim of the Mount of Olives (al-Shiyah and al-Tur, with the option of including the Intercontinental Hotel overlooking the Old City) and 'Isawiyah; and Shu'fat, Bayt Hanina, and Kafr 'Aqab in northern Jerusalem.

2. Areas in East Jerusalem, excluding Jewish neighborhoods (including the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall). All other parts of the Old City basin (the Old City, the Mount of Olives, and the City of David), which are the most important sites to all three religions, will be granted special status of sovereignty held in abeyance [ribonut mush'et] or condominium.

3. East Jerusalem, excluding Jewish neighborhoods and the Old City basin, which would remain under Israeli sovereignty.

4. East Jerusalem, excluding Jewish neighborhoods, the Jewish Cemetery on the Mount of Olives, the City of David, and the Jewish and Armenian Quarters in the Old City, which would remain under Israeli sovereignty.

5. East Jerusalem, excluding the Jewish neighborhoods. This is the most extreme territorial option.

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The authors of the document appended a list of advantages and disadvantages to the first option. Here are the advantages:

— Historic reconciliation with the Palestinians and the Muslim world and a greater chance of upholding the agreement for a long time.

— Retaining sovereignty in the Jewish neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city, the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall, and leaving a considerable part of the eastern part of the city under Israeli sovereignty.

— Palestinian recognition of Israeli sovereignty in most parts of the city, including the neighborhoods built after 1967 where 170,000 Jews live today.

— The possible attainment of territorial achievements in exchange for the Israeli concession, such as linking Ma'ale Adumim and Giv'at Ze'ev to the western part of the city and linking the 'Etzyon Bloc to Israel.

— There would be no physical partition of Jerusalem. There would be free movement between all parts of the city, without harming the social fabric, and Israel would not have to rule over 150,000 Palestinians.

— Israel's authority over external security would be retained by the city.

— This option provides for the gradual implementation of Palestinian sovereignty over a long period of time, starting with a small government compound in the context of an interim agreement through sovereignty in a major part of East Jerusalem (excluding Jewish neighborhoods) in the final arrangement.

Here are the disadvantages seen by the authors:

— Two political capitals would be created in Jerusalem. This would harm the Jewish character of the city and undermine its status as a Jewish asset.

— Palestinian sovereign rule would apply on the Temple Mount, which is sacred to the Jews.

— Foreseen difficulties in recruiting Israeli public opinion to an option that might be irreversible.

— "The administrative, policing, and judicial arrangements in the city would be complicated and could create conflicts."

By and large the second option prolongs the situation that has prevailed in the city since the Six-Day War, whereby the entire municipal area would remain under Israeli sovereignty. In the context of this plan, the authors of the document propose contemplating an exchange of territory through mutual consent for pragmatic and municipal reasons, such as improving security positions or arranging territorial continuity for the Jewish and Arab populations.

The advantages: "Retaining Jerusalem as a national Jewish asset;" "strengthening the consensus in Israeli society and the Jewish people" in light of the fact that "other options impairing Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem might exacerbate tensions to the point of political violence and cause an irreparable rupture in Israeli society." "This option could serve as an interim decision that could be discussed again in the future, when the PA proves its stability as a politically democratic body."

The disadvantages of this option: It is not entirely acceptable to the Palestinians; it might jeopardize the Israeli-Palestinian agreement; it is unacceptable to the Arab countries and might hinder the negotiations with them; and it might threaten U.S.-Israeli relations and create a constant focus of ferment in Jerusalem which could spark a new intifadah.

The third option stipulates that Israel would have exclusive sovereignty in Jerusalem within its current borders. However, it provides for minor territorial exchanges of areas within the city limits abutting the West Bank through mutual consent, while the Palestinians could be given a symbolic center of sovereignty.

The Temple Mount would be under Israel's supra-sovereignty and administered by Palestinian/Islamic/Jordanian elements.

Similar status would be accorded to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and/or the Christian Quarter, while special status could be accorded to the city inside the walls and/or the Old City basin. Christian elements, such as the Armenians in the Armenian Quarter, would be granted special status.

This option is based on the granting of functional autonomy under Israeli sovereignty to all boroughs in Jerusalem.

Autonomy would be subordinate to a supra-authority of Jerusalem Municipality and would extend to the following issues: internal tax collection; and a permanent staff running the borough's council, as well as culture, education, sports, social welfare, municipal landscaping, maintenance and sanitation, and religious services.

Administrative autonomy is also included in the previous option. The authors consider the creation of administrative boards in Jerusalem (an idea that gained momentum in recent years) "a vital component in the city's permanent arrangement."

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In their view, "major powers should be conferred to neighborhood administrative boards, such as promoting the creation of internal security cadres similar to the Civil Guard in Jewish neighborhoods and entrenching their independence vis-a-vis the municipal authorities.

"The establishment of administrative boards should be encouraged in all the city's neighborhoods. Arab neighborhoods are more willing than Jewish ones to operate in communal administrations. In this context, sub-municipalities with inter-religious and international councils could be set up for the Old City district."

The last option proposes that "the current administrative boards be expanded to all city boroughs. The composition of the administrative boards in the Old City boroughs would follow the ethnic and religious makeup of the population. The boundaries of each administrative board would be determined after consulting the representatives of the pertinent boroughs, who would be elected by their residents.

"The administrative boards would derive their power from the law, or these would be conferred upon them by the municipality. They would be in charge of issues currently outside their control. The mayor of Jerusalem would be elected in personal elections by all the inhabitants of the city, while the city council would be elected by all the inhabitants of the city based on all-city lists."

The authors believe that this last option (functional autonomy) has the highest chance of being accepted in view of the fact that the Palestinians do not accept the current situation, whereas Israel refuses to recognize Palestinian sovereignty in part of East Jerusalem.

"This is a flexible option," the document notes, "which provides for a broad variety of arrangements in almost every sphere to be discussed in the future. Another advantage lies in the fact that this option can be implemented in phases, based on the circumstances existing in Jerusalem and in the region in coming years.

"For example, the idea of initially implementing for five years the proposed autonomy regime in several areas could be contemplated. Then the sides would discuss its expansion to other areas or the enhancement of the functional autonomy agreed upon in the first stage."

The authors nevertheless believe that this option has a disadvantage as an interim plan: "If the proposed outline is not meticulously adhered to it might lead to an erosion of Israeli sovereignty in the city."

Reference to Possible Intifadah in Jerusalem

The study makes reference to a possible dispute between Israel and the PA about the permanent arrangement and a renewed deterioration of Jewish-Palestinian relations in the city.

"Any attempt to mold a relationship between Israel and the PA must be based on the knowledge that it...would not prevail in the long run. Such a relationship would change, either continuously and gradually or abruptly," the study notes. "It could deteriorate due to internal or external causes and reach total rupture. Therefore, it is vital that city limits be decided in advance. In the event that the city is partitioned, the boundaries must be agreed in advance so that they may be clearly demarcated and sealed if necessary.

"The intifadah could erupt once again in Jerusalem, and the demarcation of the borders between Palestinian and Israeli areas could take place in the midst of violence. In such an event, it would be justified to destroy buildings and erect security fences in order to demarcate the borders. Evacuating people from the vicinity of the border would necessitate their resettlement in alternative housing. Therefore, it would be advisable to start even now to prepare land for such an eventuality, both on the Jewish and the Arab sides."

The think tank believes that there is little chance of attaining an agreement about the creation of a metropolitan administration in view of the vast gap in Israeli and Palestinian standards of living, social and political constraints, Palestinian aspirations to independence, and Palestinian fears about Israel's continuing the occupation under the guise of a metropolitan administration.

Nevertheless, the authors believe that joint administration of the Jerusalem district is imperative and possible in areas where there is mutual dependence. Several localities could form an association to share metropolitan water and sewage services, and, initially, also electricity supply. The team also recommends the establishment of a general transport authority that would serve the entire Jerusalem district.

Recommendation To Examine Models of Sovereignty

"New approaches to the question of sovereignty and a variety of solutions should be raised in the negotiations about the future of Jerusalem, such as sovereignty held in abeyance, partial sovereignty, functional sovereignty, and all variations of joint sovereignty," recommend the authors of the secret document.

In their opinion, "sovereignty in Jerusalem may be the key question in the political negotiations. Sovereignty means that the state retains all powers, subject to international law and its commitments. In view of modern developments in the economic, social, and

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legal areas, sovereignty could be partial, joint, held in abeyance, or functional.

In fact, sovereignty consists of three elements: First, the body holding sovereignty is fully accountable to international law; second, it is not subordinate to another state; third, it may actually exercise a considerable amount of political power," the study notes.

"Mutual economic dependence, the free movement of people, and the universality of the media reduce the relevance of sovereignty and political borders. International law drastically limits the right of a state to use force in its international relations and restricts its right to treat its citizens as it sees fit. Except for isolated cases where the borders of a state identically correspond to national borders, the principle of sovereignty collides head-on with the principle of national self-determination.

"These developments enable the implementation of sovereignty held in abeyance, or partial, joint, or functional sovereignty in certain areas. King Husayn's pronouncement at the signing ceremony of the peace agreement in Washington to the effect that 'Jerusalem belongs to God' could be interpreted as an expression of sovereignty held in abeyance."

Possible models of joint autonomy mentioned in the document are:

1. Parallel government institutions of each of the two states executing all government powers.

2. Joint government institutions for both states executing all government powers.

3. Division of powers between separate government institutions of the two states.

4. Division of powers on a personal, rather than on a substantive basis. In other words, each of the two states would have powers over a specific sector of the population.

5. A combination of all four models is also possible: joint powers executed in parallel, other powers executed jointly, and role assignment on a substantive and/or personal basis.

Israel: Only 2 of Many Jerusalem Options Said Covered in Report

TA1903130096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The director general of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies said today that the document the institute had drafted regarding the possible status of Jerusalem is a secret paper that was circulated according to a restricted distribution list, adding that she does not know how it reached the media.

Ms. Ora Ahime'ir told our correspondent that very few copies of the document were sent to senior Israeli officials, including opposition members. She noted that the clauses that were published are only two of a wide variety of future options listed in a study on Jerusalem's status. She added that the institute had also published a book reviewing 60 solutions previously formulated for the Jerusalem problem.

Ms. Ahime'ir stressed that the institute deals with various research projects on Jerusalem, and the research that has reached the press was done in this context.

Israel: Institute Report on Jerusalem Addresses Issue of Holy Sites

TA2003114096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Mar 96 p A4

[Report by Nadav Shragay]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the options raised by the team of Israeli experts that drafted three ideas for the permanent arrangement in Jerusalem — one of which recognizes Palestinian sovereignty over part of East Jerusalem — suggests considering the expansion of the Palestinian autonomy to include the Temple Mount and allowing Palestinian religious institutions to participate, together with the Israeli authorities, in dealing with significant violations of the public order.

The team, working out of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, also suggests considering the option of granting autonomy to the Christian institutions that run the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, similar to the Temple Mount arrangement.

According to one of the options in the document, the status quo on the holy sites would be maintained and freedom of access would be observed — within the framework of the restrictions pertaining to observing the public order.

The document says: "Freedom of worship for all will be guaranteed according to the current law (including the Supreme Court rulings pertaining to Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount). A consultative committee made up of representatives of the three major religions would counsel the prime minister on matters pertaining to the holy sites. The State of Israel will recognize the special status of non-Palestinian Muslim elements, such as Jordan, on the Temple Mount.

"The religious institutions that run the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque will be granted functional autonomy to run those sites as holy places. The aforementioned Muslim institutions will also have the authority to employ a unit of supervisors who will oversee public order at the site.

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"Major violations of the public order will be dealt with by these religious Palestinian institutions and the Israeli authorities. Terror and external security incidents will fall under the jurisdiction of the Israeli authorities.

"It is recommended to consider granting autonomy to the Christian institutions running the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, similar to the arrangements on the Temple Mount." The document further suggests that "granting an autonomous status to the Armenian Quarter be considered as well."

One of the appendixes of the report dealing with the holy sites was written by Dr. Yitzhaq Reiter, a member of the institute and a renowned researcher who has published studies on the Jerusalem waqf. Reiter distinguishes between three types of holy Muslim sites in the city: the Temple Mount; active places of worship in East Jerusalem: 65 mosques and several cemeteries and burial sites; and inactive places of worship and waqf property in western Jerusalem which constitute cultural assets.

The appendix further says that on matters pertaining to Islam, it is in Israel's interest to grant the Palestinians and other Islamic elements "broad powers instead of full sovereignty because, since 1967, the Muslims have been enjoying broad autonomy on religious issues (some de facto and some de jure). Israel can grant them symbolic expressions that will make them feel in full control in this area without Israel's forsaking sovereignty."

Under the header "Powers Israel Can Give the Palestinians or Other Islamic Elements," the document says, among other things:

— recognition of management and control by an Islamic element (Palestinian, Jordanian, or pan-Arab).

— the handing over of policing powers at the site to a Palestinian or a joint Israeli-Palestinian police unit.

— the right to hoist religious Islamic flags at the site.

— the return of the Mahkeme Building and Dung Gate to the Muslims.

The appendix sums up some additional issues Israel should insist on in the negotiations:

— the right of access for Israel and the right of worship and management of holy Jewish sites in areas under Palestinian control.

— preservation of the Old City basin and nonreligious sites that constitute cultural assets.

— the reciprocal waiving of ownership claims regarding lands belonging to the waqf and lands in general.

— the establishment of a body, with the participation of foreign elements, that will supervise the status quo of the holy and cultural sites.

— a pledge to prevent religious incitement.

Following are some authorities that, according to the document, Israel can give the Palestinians (excluding the Temple Mount):

— recognition of the Shari'a court and the legal status of other countries on matters of personal status.

— recognition of Palestinian autonomous management and control over sites holy to them and places of worship.

— recognition of a Muslim body or bodies that will run the Muslims' religious affairs.

Israel: Begin Opposed; Likud Backs Agreements With Tzomet, Gesher

TA1903182996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud Central Committee a short time ago endorsed the agreements with Tzomet and Gesher by a large majority. Our correspondents Pe'erli Shahar and Yaron Deqel report that only a handful of Central Committee members abstained in the vote; the number of those who voted against the agreements was very small, with the most prominent opponent being Knesset Member [MK] Beni Begin. The Central Committee members received the results with resounding applause. Earlier, MK's David Levi and Refa'el Eytan entered the hall and were met with great applause. Dozens of balloons descended from the roof and exploded in the hall.

The voting was preceded by many speeches, but only MK Beni Begin expressed opposition to the agreements. In an extremely harsh speech, Begin derided the social message of Gesher and its leader, who deems it appropriate to be appointed foreign minister.

Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu called for uniting the entire national camp, while conceding that the price being paid by certain sectors in the party cannot be downplayed. He added, however, that this problem will be dealt with. At the same time, Netanyahu stressed that this price is nothing in comparison to the terrible price being paid by the Israeli public, which is being distanced from both peace and security.

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Israel: Rabat, Cairo Pose Hurdles in U.S. Efforts To Promote Ties

TA2003092696 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 20 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Arye Dayan]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration has recently been exerting efforts to arrange official visits to Israel by King Hassan II of Morocco and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. According to reports that reached in Jerusalem, the U.S. initiative, which has so far encountered difficulties both in Rabat and in Cairo, is part of an overall U.S. effort to bring about several positive developments in relations between Israel and Arab countries in North Africa and the Persian Gulf in the coming weeks.

U.S. officials have been strictly avoiding tying this initiative to the Israeli elections. At the same time, they say, "the peace process is at a critical breaking point" and an improvement in Arab-Israeli relations and visits to Israel by Mubarak and King Hassan could have a serious impact on the Israeli public's support for the peace process.

The U.S. effort started right after the Sharm al-Shaykh conference under explicit instructions from President Bill Clinton. During the flight from the Sinai to Israel, Clinton instructed his aides to work for the promotion of Arab-Israeli ties. Speaking in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Middle East aide Robert Pelletreau, and peace talks coordinator Dennis Ross, Clinton said: "The conference was a success. Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

Two days later, Pelletreau notified Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan of the first practical result of this effort: The next meeting of the steering committee for the multilateral talks will he held at the beginning of May in Bahrain. The Israeli delegation to the talks will probably be headed by Dayan. Pelletreau added that Egypt has recently removed the obstacle that delayed the resumption of the multilateral talks. Egypt had opposed the continuation of the talks as long as the demand it presented at the arms control committee for Israel to sign the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty has not been met.

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 20 March carries a report by David Makovsky on page 1 adding: "Israel received tentative notification yesterday that the U.S. will seek to convene a follow-up meeting on April 14 in Washington of the foreign ministers from 29 countries who attended the Sharm al-Shaykh antiterrorism conference last week, Foreign Ministry officials said."]

In addition, progress has been made in Israeli-Tunisian relations. A Tunisian delegation arrived in Israel several days ago to find a site for its representation in Tel Aviv. According to the agreement Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq and his Tunisian counterpart Habin Ben Yahya signed two months ago, the two representations should open by 15 April. Shlomo Kohen, Israel's representative to Tunisia, will travel there in the coming days. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is likely to attend the opening of the Israeli diplomatic representation there.

Israel: Expert Presents Profile of 'Suicide Terrorist'

TA2003101396 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Haim Shapiro]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite the apparent religious fanaticism of the latest wave of suicide bombers, religious motivations are not the main impetus for such terror acts, according to Prof. Ari'el Merari, a Tel Aviv University expert on terrorism.

Merari was speaking at a one day national conference on public transportation security organized by the Transportation Ministry and attended by some 400 public transportation guards.

Merari, who spoke about the profile of a suicide terrorist, said that it is possible to construct two such profiles: a demographic profile based on the suicide attacker's probable age, sex, family status, place of residence, education, and economic situation; and the psychological profile outlining the terrorist's character, motivations, personal development, and personal norms.

Although there are notable exceptions, it is relatively easy to describe the suicide attacker's demographic profile, he said. The psychological profile is far more difficult to evaluate. However, he added, it is possible to draw certain conclusions, and one is the surprisingly low importance of religion.

"(The suicide attackers) had some other reason they wanted to die. Two-thirds of the suicide car bombers in Lebanon were not Shiites," Merari said.

Merari said that an analysis of the factors influencing the suicide terrorist showed that the most important factor was the desire to commit suicide for personal reasons, not religious influences or ideological fanaticism.

In contrast with the accepted view, he said, they were people who wanted to kill themselves for purely personal motives and found a suitable framework for doing so within a terror organization.

Merari said that terror organizations which execute suicide attacks actively seek out and enlist such people.

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Jordan: Minister Denies Link Between Arrests, Hamas

JN1903215396 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said there is not any link between the recent arrests of a number of people and Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir was speaking to journalists following the meeting of the Council of Ministers tonight.

[Begin recording] [Al-Mu'ashshir] I want to emphasize that the arrests are not necessarily linked to Hamas. There are detainees who are being interrogated to make sure that they did not violate Jordanian laws concerning security considerations. Of course, the decisive thing in this respect will be the Jordanian law and Constitution. Yes, there are detainees, but the arrests have nothing to do with Hamas and were not in response to any pressures as was said. These arrests are related to security considerations. The detainees are being interrogated now, and their situation will be clear after the investigation is completed.

[Unidentified correspondent] The U.S. Administration announced that it made invitations to attend the conference. [not further identified] Has the invitation to attend the Washington conference been received? Who will represent Jordan at this meeting?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] This subject has not been discussed yet, and when it is discussed I will inform you. [end recording]

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Briefs Lower House Committee on Foreign Policy

JN1903145196 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti met at the Pictures Hall at Parliament today with the chairman and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. House Speaker Sa'id Hayil al-Surur attended the meeting. The conferees held an expanded discussion of the government's foreign policy.

Following the meeting, al-Kabariti made the following statement to reporters:

[Begin al-Kabariti recording] We held an in-depth and excellent discussion and reviewed all the bases and details of Jordanian foreign policy. I believe that the points of agreement in this session were many and they outnumbered the points of disagreement. The chairman of the [Foreign Affairs] Committee will give you more details. Thank you. [end recording]

Dr. Fawzi Tu'aymah, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, spoke to our correspondent for parliamentary affairs Jamal al- 'Abbadi, about this meeting. He said:

[Begin Tu'aymah recording] The prime minister listened to the deputies' remarks and questions about Jordanian foreign policy and its repercussions on domestic affairs. The prime minister responded to the deputies' remarks and questions, underscoring Jordan's major constants and firm principles and its unwavering concern to maintain balanced relations with all Arab countries, as well as to maintain positive regional and international relations.

Regarding Arab relations, the prime minister concentrated on Jordan's firm principles vis-a-vis the Palestinian issue and the need for full Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territory in Palestine — the West Bank and Gaza — and for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Regarding relations with Syria, there are many Jordanian attempts to establish a relationship in which there is a mutual respect and acknowledgement of Jordan's constants and principles and to restore balanced, positive, effective, and productive Jordanian-Syrian relations.

Regarding Iraq, the prime minister stressed that there will be no interference in Iraq's internal affairs, that the purpose of the deployment of U.S. planes is for training only, and that Jordanian planes will not participate in any sorties over southern Iraq. These are the major bases — the Iraqi and Palestinian issues.

Regarding the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, there were no secret, undeclared decisions. The secret session that followed the public session of the conference did not last more than 15 minutes. The only address was made by His Majesty King Husayn. He reviewed the deliberations that took place. Jordan had a distinguished effort in an Arab meeting that took place on the sidelines of the peacemakers summit to emerge with a common Arab vision with respect to the peace issues as well as the regional and international security issues. Jordan was the only country that defined terrorism and jihad during the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. Once again, I say that Jordan, as his excellency the prime minister stressed, will not be a bridge for interference in the affairs of any Arab country, especially Iraq, and that Jordan is concerned about Iraq's unity. Jordan is eager to maintain balanced relations with all Arab brothers. This is how I sum up the discussions that took place with his excellency the prime minister today. [end recording]

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Jordan: Prime Minister Discloses Bids To 'Destabilize' Government

JN2003102296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — At least 36 terrorist attempts targetting Jordanian personalities and aiming at destabilising the regime were thwarted in the past six months, Prime Minister 'Abd al- Karim al-Kabariti revealed on Tuesday. [Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic on 20 March adds in a report on pages 1 and 21 that "these terrorist attempts targeted Jordanian and non-Jordanian political personalities and some national institutions. They were aimed at undermining security and stability and encroaching on Jordan's position."]

Mr. al-Kabariti, confirming reports of arrests of some militants last week during a meeting with members of the Lower House's Foreign Affairs Committee, said all arrests "come within the framework of applying the rule of law and the Kingdom's keenness to preserve its security and stability."

According to Islamic Action Front Deputy Dhib 'Abdallah, at least 20 people have been arrested in the past few days. Three of them, 'Ikrimah Gharayibah, 'Ali al-Faqir and Yusuf Gharayibah possessed anti-tank rockets, anti-personnel mines and detonators to be used to launch attacks against Israel, he said.

Dr. 'Abdallah, chairperson of the House's Freedoms Committee, confirmed that the three, will be brought to trial very soon. He said that five of the 20 arrested militants had been released. The information could not be confirmed from official sources on Tuesday, but Dr. 'Abdallah said he met with Minister of Interior 'Wad Khulayfat who assured him that all suspects would be accorded fair and legal treatment.

"Five have been released today and more will be freed following investigations," Dr. 'Abdallah told the JORDAN TIMES.

Mr. al-Kabariti said in the meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee that all arrested people were entitled to fair treatment and said that as long as these arrests were in line with the law, they could not be considered as violation of public freedoms and democratic principles.

Mr. al-Kabariti was quoted as saying by the chairperson of the committee, Fawzi Tu'aymah, that there was no "dual application" of the rule of law and that Jordan was protecting its security.

Mr. al-Kilani denied that the people arrested had links with the Palestinian militant group Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and said they were arrested individually for suspected attempts to destabilise the country.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti—Government Wants Better Ties With Syria

JN2003102496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al- Kabariti said Tuesday Jordan hoped to maintain good relations with Syria but that the Kingdom would enhance relations with its neighbour only if the latter reciprocated.

Mr. al-Kabariti, briefing the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House of Parliament on Jordan's foreign policy, stressed the Kingdom's keenness to preserve good relations with all Arab countries, Syria in particular, but pointed to differences in views over the distribution of roles in the region.

Fawzi Tu'aymah, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said the premier asserted that points of contention between Jordan and Syria "are related to some countries' attempts to seek a role in the region."

"But we have no intention to interfere in Syria just as we don't like Syria to interfere in our own affairs," Dr. Tu'aymah quoted Mr. al-Kabariti as saying.

Mr. al-Kabariti said that improving relations with Syria should be reciprocal. "Jordan seeks good relations with Syria, but Syria should have the same desire," he said.

Mr. al-Kabariti said that relations between Syria and Jordan should be based on mutual respect and not directed "by some countries' ambition to exercise hegemony over other countries."

Dr. Tu'aymah said Mr. al-Kabariti described a meeting he had with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruk al-Shar' on the sidelines of a meeting of Arab foreign ministers at the Arab League last week as "stormy but ultimately frank."

"It was a Jordanian initiative to improve relations with Syria," Dr. Tu'aymah quoted Mr. al-Kabariti as saying. "The (Cairo) meeting ended calmly but there were no concrete results."

However, Mr. al-Kabariti did not rule out future meetings between the two countries at all levels, Dr. Tu'aymah said.

On Jordan's policy towards Iraq, the premier said that its position had not changed, according to Dr. Tu'aymah.

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He told the committee that Jordan had sought and continues to seek to help Iraq overcome the difficult situation it is in, but the obstacles facing Iraq in its effort to implement United Nations Resolution 986 is due to efforts by "some countries" to foil the oil-for-food deal that the resolution proposes.

"Jordan is not a window that (others) can use to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs," Mr. al-Kabariti was quoted as saying. Mr. al-Kabariti also called on deputies not to have double-standards and "not to expect from Jordan what they do not expect from others."

Mr. al-Kabariti was apparently referring to a criticism against Jordan's reported readiness to host an Iraqi opposition meeting here.

The meeting is expected to be held in Syria in the first week of next month.

Reports suggest that the conference, called by the Iraqi office of the Syrian Ba'th Party, might not succeed in gathering a large number of Iraqi opposition groups because some groups reject what they see as Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's aims to thwart efforts by Jordan to put together an Iraqi opposition coalition.

The premier also referred his planned trip to Japan next week and said he pinned great hope on the visit to lead to enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

Jordan: Crown Prince Hasan Urges Regional Political Cooperation

JN2003114996 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, stressed the importance of comprehensive regional security.

The regent, speaking during the closing session of a two-day Arab-Turkish relations seminar, said all countries in the region should participate in shaping the area's overall political picture. His royal highness said the region must work hard on creating an independent regional bloc that has its own distinct identity and works as one entity, whether politically, economically, or culturally.

The regent, addressing a group of Arab and Turkish politicians, economists, and scholars said that a common regional perception of international events and issues should be established. His royal highness however stressed that in order to have a comprehensive approach to issues, each and every country in the area should participate, citing conflict resolution as an example.

[Begin Hasan recording] In the cultural interreligious strife aspects of the common issues between the conflict in the Balkans, the conflicts in central Asia, and — by extension — the conflict in the Middle East or Near East region, that it is impossible to talk about comprehensiveness without all of us, given our distinctive geographic and political location and situation, contributing and sharing in this regional responsibility at the regional [word indistinct] of the world. [end recording]

Jordan: Information Minister Meets B'nai B'rith Team

JN1903163896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir today met with a U.S. Jewish delegation from the Washington-based B'nai B'rith International Center. Information Ministry Under Secretary Nayif Mula attended the meeting, which took place at the Information Ministry.

At the outset of the meeting, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir welcomed the delegation. He explained the Jordanian Government's position and its commitment to the peace process with Israel. He also briefed the delegation members on the economic situation in Jordan and the government's efforts to attract foreign investment by amending several laws, including the Income Tax Law, the Companies Law, the Investment Law, and the Intellectual Property Law.

The conferees discussed various political and economic issues and the peace developments in the region.

At the conclusion of the meeting, (Toni Perr), the head of delegation, voiced his appreciation and gratitude for the Jordanian Government's efforts to boost the peace process and to make it a reality in all fields.

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri on Israeli Threats, Palestinians Actions

NC1903205596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] After a meeting with President Ilyas al-Hirawi in B'abda tonight, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said the region's problems can only be resolved by Israel's withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territories and the Golan.

He emphasized that the talk about military operations complicates the peace process. He noted that Lebanon desires peace most of all, but the Israelis' statements do not fall in this context. He stressed that resistance is the result of occupation.

Al-Hariri said some people, particularly the Palestinians, are acting in a way that does not serve Lebanon's interests. On the contrary, he added, it serves Israel's interests. He denounced the statements by Palestinian officials in Lebanon, saying that the events in the [Palestinian] 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp are childish and do not benefit either Lebanon or the Palestinians.

Reiterating Lebanon's refusal to accept any Palestinian deportees, he said Israel knows this very well.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Further Discusses Israeli Threats, Palestinians

NC2003075696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 20 Mar 96

[News conference by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri with unidentified correspondents in Beirut on 20 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Hariri] I saw the statement Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz made. Of course, he is talking in the name of the government. This subject was discussed. We believe that the problems in the region cannot be resolved without Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories and the Golan Heights. The solution is a political one. Any attempts at escalating the [military] situation only complicates matters further and will not yield results.

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, there are fears regarding Israeli action against the south.

[Al-Hariri] I have just spoken about this. We believe that any Israeli military action against Lebanon will only complicate matters and the peace process and will not yield results.

[Correspondent] What are your views on the U.S. Embassy statement and Lebanese-U.S. relations?

[Al-Hariri] I think the ambassador and Minister Buwayz have commented enough on the embassy statement. I have nothing to add on this.

[Correspondent] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak asked the Israeli prime minister to calm the situation in the south. Was this the result of your talks with him in Egypt?

[Al-Hariri] There is no doubt that our Egyptian brothers cannot accept having the conference that took place [in Sharm al-Shaykh] be a cover up for any military operation against Lebanon or any other Arab country. They realize that this only complicates the peace process, which they are concerned about.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] in Egypt that the peace talks will be postponed until after the Israeli elections. Therefore, we are going through a no-action period. What will the character of this period be? Could pressures on Lebanon increase, for example?

[Al-Hariri] You know that Lebanon has gone through very difficult times, which it managed to overcome. I heard the statements that took place during the past few days, whether from the Israelis or other sides. Undoubtedly, there are two issues we would like to concentrate on. We are a country that has suffered a great deal from war. Our sons have paid a high price as a result of the war that raged here. Therefore, we are the people who want peace the most and who want this situation, which is affecting Lebanon, to end. At the same time, we want a just and comprehensive peace. So far, Israel has not shown any intention toward peace. This is on one hand. On the other hand, some statements have been issued by Israeli officials recently claiming that Lebanon is going back to its pre-1982 situation. This is something we categorically refute. These are all incorrect pretexts. At the same time, there are some organizations and people, particularly the Palestinian brothers, who have recently done some things. We do not accept such behavior and believe that this behavior and the things that have been said serve Israel's interests and not Lebanon's.

[Correspondent] Will any action be taken to counter this behavior?

[Al-Hariri] We are holding diplomatic contacts with all our friends. We are clarifying our situation. We have a problem, which is Israeli occupation. There is resistance in Lebanon, the reason for which is the occupation. Any other issue outside of this framework will not be accepted by Lebanon. Many actions have taken place by Palestinian brothers who are living here as guests. They are behaving in a way that we see as inappropriate.

[Correspondent] Could they be asked to leave Lebanon?

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[Al-Hariri] The Lebanese state will do everything that is appropriate for it and that is in its interest?

[Correspondent] Are there any contacts taking place to prevent another deportation?

[Al-Hariri] This is yet another topic which we have discussed with all our friends. We cannot accept having some Palestinian brothers thrown out of Israel and into Lebanon as deportees. We cannot allow this at all. The Israelis know this through the Americans. We have informed everyone through diplomatic channels.

[Correspondent] Do you expect military surprises following the recent Israeli threats?

[Al-Hariri] What we are saying is that any military action will complicate and not facilitate the peace process.

[Correspondent] What do you think is Lebanon's interest as far as the Palestinians are concerned? You said that there could be deportations....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] Are you talking about the Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank and the deportation of Palestinians from Israel to Lebanon?

[Correspondent] Yes.

[Al-Hariri] This is rejected. This is totally rejected. As you know, some Palestinians were deported to Marj al-Zuhur [in south Lebanon], where they stayed for three years. In the end, Israel had to take them back. This is something that we can never tolerate. As for the Palestinians residing here, as guests of the country they are supposed to act accordingly.

[Correspondent] What about the political statements being made?

[Al-Hariri] We are totally against them, and I say this before the media. This is something that is not permissible. The things that happened in 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp are childish. They benefit Israel, but produce no gain, not for the Palestinians or the Lebanese.

[Correspondent] Will the Lebanese Army enter the Palestinian camps?

[Al-Hariri] No, it will not go that far. There is no justification for this. At any rate, what happened was a television show, and we are responding to it in the same way [laughter]. The actions taken by some of the brother Palestinians here over the past few days are not suitable and do not serve Palestinian or Lebanese interests. They lead nowhere. Nobody brings children, videotapes them, and then says that these are going to blow themselves up. This is inaccurate, improper, and against the interest of Lebanon and the Palestinians, whether those here or the others.

[Correspondent] Does Lebanon hold firm to the July 1993 agreement in this regard, to avoid any escalation?

[Al-Hariri] I believe that this agreement is in the interest of all parties.

[Correspondent] Some other Palestinian political statements were issued in Beirut, specifically by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] officials present in Beirut. What do you think of these?

[Al-Hariri] Well, we are against all these things. The Palestinians living here are guests, and they should behave accordingly. As for resistance against the Israeli occupation by Lebanese resistance, we believe that it was the occupation that gave rise to the resistance. Other than and beyond this framework, we disapprove of, deplore, and are against any other action.

[Correspondent] Will you take specific security measures to prevent these things?

[Al-Hariri] We will see what we can do about them.

[Correspondent] Regarding the U.S. stand, [words indistinct] third message after....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] No, don't mix things up; don't confuse things....

[Correspondent, interrupting] The U.S. State Department, and this message....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] How about you making the statement? [laughter] There is no point in mixing things up. The U.S. statement, issued by the embassy here, was about the trial, and this was discussed by His Excellency Minister Buwayz, who said what had to be said to the ambassador. I have nothing to add to this. Some Lebanese politicians have made statements regarding the president's reply to the invitation to the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, saying that the president should not have responded. I believe that such talk is pointless. The president, as head of state, received an invitation, and he has the right to consult with the prime minister, and this is what he did. On the basis of this consultation, a decision was made not to take part, and that was the answer sent. To say that the president had no power to do this or to cast doubts, I believe, would not benefit the country. On the contrary, it would lead to divisions in the country, which we can do without at the moment. I wish that some of the deputies who made these remarks would seek Lebanon's supreme interests. There is no need to engage in one-upmanship at the present time.

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Lebanon: Hizballah Official Cited on Israeli Threats

JN1903180196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Over the past few hours, the likelihood of Israel carrying out an operation in southern Lebanon primarily targeting Hizballah positions has increased. It should be recalled that Israeli officials, through their recent statements, have given the impression that a decision to carry out such an operation has been made, but that the timing and most appropriate scenario are yet to be decided. The overriding concern is not to hurt Shim'on Peres' election prospects one week before the Labor Party's primaries and two months before the general elections. This escalation prompted major world media organizations to send missions to the Lebanese-Israeli border area in anticipation of something that could happen any time. However, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this afternoon cooled tension when he ruled out the likelihood of an imminent Israeli army operation in southern Lebanon, contending that now is not the right time for a strike against Hizballah. He argued that Hizballah personnel have withdrawn from their positions. He added that world media missions are in the border area awaiting an operation. At any rate, Peres' statements, which conflict with his previous statements, did not cool tensions in Lebanon. There still are great fears about a possible Israeli military operation. [passage omitted]

A short while ago, we telephoned Hizballah officials. Al-Hajj Husayn al-Khalil, political assistant to the Hizballah secretary general, answered the questions of Salim Badawi. Regarding Israeli threats, al-Khalil said:

[Begin recording] I believe the Lebanese people do not need to hear any threats because Israel has carried out all its previous threats. We do not believe there is anything new. We believe that the Lebanese people, with their Islamic and nationalist resistance and with all their sectors and institutions, are ready to face any kind of threat. Similarly, they are ready to defend themselves, their territory, their homeland, their kinsfolk, and their people at any moment. If anything, the recurring crimes and this new refrain from threats are indicative of a coordinated policy between the U.S. Administration and the Zionist leadership in the wake of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. This episode is concocted by the Americans and Israelis. It is aimed at achieving certain policy goals with a view to polishing the image of Shim'on Peres, who is facing imminent elections. It is also aimed at boosting the image of the U.S. Administration in the upcoming phase. [end recording]

Lebanon: Israeli Operation Said Suspended After U.S. 'Pressure'

NC2003073796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] AFP quoted an unnamed Israeli source as saying that the United States put pressure on Israel to abstain from carrying out a wide-scale military operation against Lebanon scheduled for yesterday. The source added that Israel suspended the operation after President Clinton's direct intervention.

Lebanon: Foreign Ministry Rejects U.S. Embassy Statement

NC1903174196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Lebanese Foreign Ministry has released a statement rejecting the U.S. Embassy's statement and considering it a deviation from traditions, norms, and international conventions.

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said that the method that the U.S. Embassy used is unfamiliar and diplomatically unacceptable. He stressed that the continued Israeli occupation of south Lebanon makes resistance inevitable.

Milhim Miski, the director of the foreign minister's office, read the Foreign Ministry statement rejecting the U.S. Embassy statement released yesterday. The Foreign Ministry statement emphasized that the U.S. Embassy statement constitutes a deviation from traditions, norms, and relevant international conventions, particularly the Vienna Convention of 1961.

Lebanon: U.S. Envoy Told of Rejection of Statement's 'Substance'

NC2003073996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz summoned U.S. Ambassador in Lebanon Richard Jones and informed him of Lebanon's rejection of the substance of the U.S. Embassy statement. Jones declined to add anything to the statement, which he described as adequate. He noted that the statement does not criticize the government. He added: There is a need for all parties to comply with the applicable agreements and avoid any measures that may escalate the situation. Jones did not see any threats being made against Lebanon.

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Lebanon: Buwayz Criticizes U.S. Embassy Statement on Verdict

NC1903191896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference held this afternoon, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said that the U.S. Embassy's statement concerning the verdict issued by the judiciary acquitting the defendants who were accused of assassinating former U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis Meloy is uncustomary and diplomatically unacceptable. This is because the Foreign Ministry learned of it through the press and without any advance consultations, Buwayz added.

Minister Buwayz restated that the judiciary in Lebanon is an independent authority that is respected throughout the Arab countries. He added that the political authorities have no influence on the judiciary. The foreign minister stressed that the political situation in the region is not related to the judiciary or domestic matters. He drew attention to the fact that if Lebanon obtains new information it will then be possible, according to the laws, to reopen the file and bring the defendants to trial.

Minister Buwayz reiterated Lebanon's complete commitment to the peace process and the efforts to reach a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in accordance with the resolutions adopted during the Madrid conference. Minister Buwayz pointed out that the continued Israeli occupation of the south prompts resistance, adding that Israel's threats and acts of violence and terrorism have never been proven capable of resolving the problem. Minister Buwayz had the following:

[Begin Buwayz recording] I believe that the statement issued by the Foreign Ministry explains fully the Lebanese government's stance on this issue. If we have to talk about this issue, we must first say that the method used by the U.S. Embassy is not customary and is not acceptable under customary diplomatic norms. The Foreign Ministry is not usually informed of statements through the press. The ambassador must consult with us, and on the basis of its interpretations the embassy could have adopted a stand later.

Regarding the substance of the issue, we believe first of all that those who talk about the institutions, rights, and justice as well as about the judiciary and human rights must realize that the judiciary in Lebanon is an independent authority and a respected authority in the Arab world and this region. The political authorities had no influence over the judiciary in connection with the timing of the verdict, which was issued after the case was referred to the court. Therefore, the verdict is neither linked to the recent dramatic developments in the region nor to the conferences held in the region. It is illogical that the judiciary be expected to deal with political events that occur in the region.

Furthermore, the courts, based on the available information and evidence and on the basis of its conviction, convicted the abductors. It transpired that their case benefited from the amnesty law. However, there has been no proof or evidence that the killings were carried out by those who basically abducted the two U.S. diplomats and the Lebanese driver. There are actually two groups involved. One group stopped and abducted the two diplomats; it has been convicted, but the amnesty law covers such cases. The other group carried out the killings. So far we have no information on the identity of the persons who carried out the crime. Hence, the court issued this verdict with full conviction, in accordance with the Lebanese laws and regulations, and according to the evidence available.

If there is fresh information that was not available before the verdict was issued and which was not examined by the court in time, there are ways under Lebanese law for a review. The most important way is to reopen the trial in accordance with crucial and documented information made available after the trial.

As for the political aspect of the statement and the way it links a verdict issued by a sovereign court with political situations or with the development of the political and security situation in Lebanon or in the region, we firmly believe that this link is unjustified and unacceptable. We believe that the issue of terrorism in the region is condemned by the Lebanese state and by all Lebanese and has nothing to do with the legitimate resistance on Lebanese territory or our self-defense, particularly when Lebanon is being subjected to Israeli air strikes and artillery bombardment, including cluster, nail, and fragmentation bombs as well as booby-trapped children's toys. [end recording]

Lebanon: Bomb in Car of Islamic Resistance Fighter Defused

NC2003085796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance once again proved its ability to deny the occupation troops the chance to attack the resistance and its fighters, preventing a massacre that would have taken the lives of five children about to go to school. The Islamic Resistance yesterday managed to discover and detonate an explosive device planted in the car of an Islamic Resistance fighter in al-Ghanduriyah, thus denying the enemy the chance to attack the resistance mujahidin.

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The Islamic Resistance issued a statement explaining the Zionist treacherous plan. The statement noted that one of the schemes, resulting from the U.S.-sponsored Sharm al-Shaykh summit—which consolidated the enemy's arrogance, tyranny, and terrorism against our steadfast folk in the south—was foiled yesterday. The scheme would have led to the massacre of an entire family, mostly children, in al-Ghanduriah. Their father, an Islamic Resistance fighter, was about to drive them to their school when he discovered the bomb. A Finnish patrol from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon along with an explosives expert from the Islamic Resistance arrived at the scene. After a thorough inspection, the expert said the device—containing approximately 2 kg of highly explosive material—had been placed under the driver's seat. After the area was evacuated, the bomb was detonated, in the presence of the UN force.

Concluding, the Islamic Resistance said that this cowardly attempt revealed the enemy's inability to face the Islamic Resistance fighters face to face. By resorting to terrorist and barbaric methods, the enemy imagines that it can silence the voice of our steadfast folk and quell their sense of resistance. The Islamic Resistance thus proves that it is the guardian of our security and that it is always ready to cut the arms that tamper with security and safety.

Lebanon: Israel Accused of 'Planting' Bomb in Hizballah Member's Car

NC1903152696 Paris AFP in English 1052 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tyre, Lebanon, March 19 (AFP) — Hizballah explosives experts on Tuesday [19 March] defused a bomb concealed in the car of a member of the Iranian-backed group in south Lebanon.

The bomb was found as a Hizballah member in al-Ghanduriyah village on the edge of the Israeli-occupied "security zone" got into his car to drive his five children to school, a Hizballah spokesman said. Bomb disposal experts rushed to the scene and blew up the car, the spokesman said, adding that no one was hurt.

Hizballah, which spearheads attacks on Israeli forces in the occupied zone, accused Israel of planting the bomb.

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Syria: Press Analyzes Israel's 'Obstruction' of Peace

JN2003085796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 20 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its commentary headlined "Settling in the Golan and the Peace Process," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The Israeli Government deliberately obstructs peace efforts, whether through direct aggression, as is the case in Lebanon, through fatal blockades, as in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or through open announcements on new settlements in the occupied Golan Heights.

AL-BA'TH says: The settlements Israel has imposed on others and the understanding it has reached with some Arabs do not achieve peace and security. This is because the key to the region is not in the hands that encouraged the Israelis to increase their arrogance and because the Zionist settlements in the Golan constitute a tool to destroy the hopes created by Madrid conference, which attracted world efforts. The future of the settlements announced by Shim'on Peres in Golan will be no better than that of the French settlements in Algeria and North Africa. The Golan is Syrian land and will continue to be so.

AL-BA'TH stresses: Peres' announcement on settlement activity in the Golan constitutes an Israeli desire to defy the Arabs and the United Nations.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Israel's obstruction of peace shows its insistence not to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. The proof is the continued occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the confiscation of land, the continued hegemony on the leased Jordan Valley land, and the recent announcement on new settlements in the Golan. After all this, can the parties to the separate agreements come up with even one witness to prove that Israel is serious about withdrawal, and consequently, about opening the doors for real peace?

In its commentary headlined "The Return to Madrid," the newspaper TISHRIN says the escalating tension in southern Lebanon is a result of provocative threats and statements by Israel.

TISHRIN says: All this is a result of the continued Israeli occupation and the Tel Aviv rulers' refusal to implement UN Security Council Resolution No. 425. Observers are apt to believe that the Israeli escalation is linked to the election campaign. The Labor and Likud parties are competing to present extremist stands and flex their muscles at a time when the peace issue is retreating.

TISHRIN adds: After he became prime minister, Shim'on Peres said that peace is more important than elections, but he did nothing to advance the peace process. In fact, after the recent bombings, he acted like peace had become an unimportant issue. He imposed a tight military siege on the occupied territories, exercised the iron fist policy, withdrew his negotiating delegation from Maryland talks with Syria, and set conditions to resume these talks. Syria rejects these conditions, because no one can dictate its policy. Nor does it yield to pressures. It only acts on its convictions.

TISHRIN says: The region has witnessed catastrophes and woes as a result of Israel's unjust policies. The peace issue should not turn into a subject for one-upmanship, as is taking place in Israel. The Tel Aviv rulers should now explain the facts and requirements of peace, particularly full withdrawal and recognition of Arab rights, to their people.

TISHRIN concludes: Out of its faith in the sanctity and importance of peace and based on its efforts to save the peace process, Syria has called for the resumption of the Madrid conference to discuss the reasons behind the current worrisome situation. The Madrid conference was based on well-known principles and has international terms of reference. The peace process basically stumbled due to Israel's violation of these principles and terms of reference. Returning to the Madrid conference, its principles, and terms of reference will secure the appropriate circumstances and conditions to revive and reactivate the peace process after all the weakness it has sustained.

In its commentary headlined "The Required Step," AL-THAWRAH wonders: Can Israel buy peace through false propaganda, coercion, and terrorism? This question is being asked in light of Israel's apparent intransigent stand toward ignoring the historical and realistic facts of the conflict and the fact that it is impossible for peace and occupation to go together. AL-THAWRAH stresses: Israel did not give the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace based on the land-for-peace formula a chance. It wants to hold onto what it has obtained from the partial agreements that have failed to settle the conflict and quell tension in the region. It is looking for a free hand to launch a new kind of war under the peace process umbrella.

AL-THAWRAH notes: In all its practices, actions, and negotiations method, Israel has always looked for complications that would allow it to blackmail the Arab sides and evade the requirements of peace.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: The international community, particularly the peace cosponsors, should have looked for its credibility by saving its legitimacy and

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forcing Israel to submit to its will and implement the resolutions, instead of steering its interest toward the direction in which Israel itself is interested — away from a just and comprehensive peace.

Syria: Chinese Delegation Arrives in Damascus on Visit

JN1903190396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Qian Weichang, vice chairman head of the National Council of the Political Consultative Congress for the Chinese People, and the delegation accompanying him arrived in Damascus this afternoon on an official week long visit to Syria at the invitation of the National Progressive Front [NPF]. [passage omitted]

Weichang made a statement to a SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, correspondent. He said: It gives me great pleasure to head the delegation of the Chinese National Council on a cordial visit to Syria at the invitation of the NPF. [passage omitted]

He added: I look forward to exchanging views with the NPF's Central Command and Syrian officials on promoting the existing cordial relations between the Chinese and Syrian peoples as well as the great issues of mutual interest.

Weichang said: I am confident that this visit will definitely enhance the acquaintance and friendship between both sides and will also promote the cordial relations of cooperation between both countries. This is in agreement with the common desire of our two peoples and is in the interest of the cause of mankind's progress and world peace.

Concluding his statement, Weichang said: I wish Syria prosperity and its people happiness and progress. I also wish the relations of friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and Syrian peoples continued progress.

Syria: NPF, Chinese Delegation Discuss Cooperation, Improved Ties

JN2003105396 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Talks between a National Progressive Front [NPF] delegation led by Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, vice president and deputy head of the NPF, and a delegation from the National Council of the Political Consultative Congress for the Chinese People, led by Qian Weichang, deputy head of the council, was held at the NPF Central Command this evening. [passage omitted]

Mashariqah welcomed the guest delegation. He then proceeded with a comprehensive review of the NPF and its role in the country, its participation in decisionmaking, its embodiment of party and political pluralism, and its expression of national unity that confirms its efficiency and competence in confronting the challenges.

Mashariqah discussed the enhanced relations between the Syrian NPF and the Chinese National Council. He stressed the need to develop these relations in a way that expresses the strong friendship between both peoples.

Mashariqah also discussed bilateral relations and the need to consolidate them, as well as international developments and the situation in the Middle East and Far East.

He emphasized Syria's firm adherence to the peace process in order to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of international legitimacy and the Security Council resolutions — peace that will return the land to its owners and provide security and stability to all states in the region.

(Weichang) stressed the need to enhance ties between the National Council and the NPF and to consolidate the friendship and cooperation between Syria and China.

(Weichang) briefed the meeting participants on the National Council and its role in China's political life. He also reviewed the situation in China and development there. He said the current international situation requires more cooperation among states, particularly Third World states, to confront and overcome new challenges.

Weichang also discussed the ongoing tension due to Taiwan's attempts to entrench its separation from China. He said: There is only one China. He voiced China's great appreciation for the political policy Syria is committed to under President Hafiz al-Asad. He said that the Chinese political leadership and people have special respect for the president, who is strongly defending the interests of his people and the nation's pan-Arab interests.

Mashariqah hosted a dinner banquet this evening in honor of the Chinese delegation. It was attended by some members of the NPF Central Command.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Says Peace Talks Made 'Noticeable Progress'

LD1903202796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 19 Mar 96

[End of year speech by Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani in Kabul on 19 March — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Dear compatriots, the country's peasants and cattle-breeders: May peace and the blessings of God be upon you. Marking new year's day and celebrating the new year has a special place in the culture and ancient history of this land. [passage omitted]

The year of 1374 [ending on 20 March 1996] was a year full of events, and sometimes there were events that were painful to our people. Conspiracies and foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan were not only continuing but were continuing very openly and explicitly. Some circles tried to endanger the territorial integrity of our country. For this purpose, some regions of our country were blatantly occupied. Plans and conspiracies were hatched to topple Islamic sovereignty and to set up a puppet regime.

With courage and bravery, the heroic people of our country defended and safeguarded their Islamic revolution, independence, and national sovereignty. All efforts by the enemies of the independent, united, and proud Afghanistan, made in various military, political, and economic dimensions to weaken the spirit of resistance by the persevering and proud people of this territory, were defeated. [passage omitted]

Dear compatriots: We begin the new year with circumstances and conditions wherein we have enormous hopes for achieving a national understanding and for restoring and strengthening a durable peace in the country. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, which has always emphasized the peaceful resolution of the country's issues, expressed once again in a statement in the last months of [word indistinct] its unreserved readiness to hold talks with opposition groups to get rid of the stalemate, find a permanent solution to issues, and end the hostilities. [passage omitted]

As a result of the government's initiative and flexibility, the processes for the political solution of the issues were accelerated. The door opened for talks with the majority of the groups and political forces. Various delegations were dispatched to the headquarters of the relevant groups to meet and to hold talks. As a result, agreements were concluded with some groups and talks are under way with some other groups. These have made noticeable progress.

Now the facts are very clear. The fighting is the result of conspiracies, intrigues, and intervention which have been imposed on our country from outside. If this intervention ends, the people of Afghanistan can, in a very short time, resolve their differences. We believe that Afghans must sit down together. They must seek and find a satisfactory and a profound solution to the important national issues and subjects which are relevant to the fate of the homeland and the future of their Islamic system through talks and consultation, in accordance with the lofty principles of their sacred region and in accordance with the norms and accepted principles of their national traditions.

At these sensitive and historic moments facing our country, it is the Islamic duty and historical responsibility for all our people — in particular the esteemed jihadi leaders, ulema, and influential national and social figures — to sit together with honesty and sincerity and to take a joint decision. In this way, we will end all hostilities, tensions, and distrust and put the country in a new stage of [word indistinct] trust and cooperation.

The Islamic government has already taken the first step on this path, and, of course, will be ready to take further action.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan respects the principle of peaceful coexistence and good neighborliness with all countries on the basis of the principle of reciprocal respect for independence, national sovereignty and non-intervention in each other's internal affairs.

Afghans, just as they denounce every intervention in the internal affairs of others, of course, will not allow any power to interfere in the internal affairs of their country.

We have complete faith in the future prosperity of our people and their ability to find a solution to the problems and difficulties they are facing. We are following the process to find a peaceful solution to the problems being pursued by the Afghans themselves and the launching of inter-Afghan talks, which have been progressing satisfactorily so far. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan: Mass Grave Found Near Jalalabad; Previous Regime Blamed

LD1903213096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A mass grave was recently discovered in a location near Nangarhar Province. BAKHTAR reports that in the graveyard, located two km south of Jalalabad city, 500 bodies, buried alive

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by the murderers from the previous regime, were discovered.

The grave is three meters wide and 50 meters long. One hundred corpses were found with their legs tied together and the earth around them was filled by tractors.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fires Rockets at Kabul; Mines Defused

LD1903180996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The city of Kabul was the target of four rockets today. BAKHTAR reports that these rockets were fired by Benazir's Bhutto's Taleban from the southern direction on the residential areas of the city. One child was wounded as a result.

According to another report, two mines were defused today in [words indistinct] area. The mines were of the (?TNT) type and had been clearly planted [words indistinct]. They were discovered and neutralized by the police.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Demonstrations Held on 10th Day of Noncooperation Program

BK1803162896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today was the 10th day of the countrywide noncooperation program of major opposition parties. Rickshas, ricksha vans, three-wheeled taxis, and small trucks began plying in Dhaka and suburban areas early this morning. A number of buses, private cars, and trucks were also seen plying the roads. Fire crackers and bombs exploded in the capital and [word indistinct] places and supporters of the noncooperation program damaged vehicles at various locations. Opposition supporters held processions at Mirpur, Pandubi, Farm Gate, Mogbazar, Press Club, Nawabpur, Gulistan and Jatrabari areas.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its ancillary organizations arranged processions and rallies against the noncooperation program at various places in the city.

Work in all government offices was normal. Airport sources said that all international and domestic flights operated normally. Dhaka waterways sources said that a considerable number of ferries operated from Dhaka and nearby places today; however, train communications remained suspended. Loading and unloading of goods at Mongla Port was normal.

Bangladesh Awami League held a rally at Dhaka's Pantha Path to mark the 76th birthday anniversary of late president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today. It was addressed by Awami leader Chairperson Sheikh Hasina and other party leaders. In her address, Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed her demand for holding free and impartial elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Bangladesh: Police Fire Tear Gas To Quell Clashes by Political Parties

BK1603145296 Hong Kong AFP in English 1433 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh, March 16 (AFP) — Some 50 people were injured Saturday as supporters of Bangladesh's two main political parties engaged in a gunbattle in this southeastern port city, exchanging fire as well as setting off bombs, police said.

Witnesses said the clashes erupted after Fisheries Minister Abdullah Al Noman arrived at a rally of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in the city centre, when rivals from the Awami League party fired guns and set off home-made bombs.

Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas canisters to disperse the attackers, but the clashes continued late Saturday.

The rally was cut short after a brief speech by Noman, witnesses said.

Police said 20 people were being treated at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital with bullet or bomb injuries.

The clashes took place as Bangladesh's crippling opposition-called nationwide shutdown entered its second week Saturday.

More than 100 people have died nationwide, mostly since the controversial February 15 general elections, in the two-year anti-government campaign.

Earlier Saturday, naval forces occupied the port of Chittagong as business leaders staged demonstrations demanding an immediate end to the country's two-year-old political impasse.

Opposition groups are demanding the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and the holding of new elections under a neutral, caretaker government.

Zia's BNP won elections held February 15, but these were boycotted by the opposition and declared suspect by independent observers.

Analysts have said the continued strife here could lead to a "state of emergency" or an eventual takeover by the military, which has ruled Bangladesh for 15 years of its 25-year existence.

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Bangladesh: Army Deployed To Restore Supplies, Communications

BK2003050096 Hong Kong AFP in English 0439 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 20 (AFP) — Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government has called in the army to restore supplies and communications in the face of a crippling nationwide strike, a defence ministry spokesman said Wednesday.

"The deployment started late last night," the spokesman told AFP.

He said he could not give further details of the operation immediately, but a statement would be issued explaining the army's role and the duration of the deployment.

The army was seen moving in convoys in the capital Dhaka, the southeastern port city of Chittagong, eastern Comilla and the nearby districts of Akhaura and Brahmanbaria.

This is the second time the army has been called out to help the government since the February 15 general elections, boycotted by the opposition, which sparked widespread violence across Bangladesh.

The opposition's "non-cooperation" campaign entered its 12th day Wednesday.

Navy troops have already been deployed in the key Chittagong port, but operations were yet to start, port sources said.

Zia and her new cabinet were sworn in Tuesday at a ceremony that was not attended by Western diplomats, who were represented by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Palestinian Ambassador Sahata Zarab.

The Daily Star newspaper said the diplomats would also not attend the inaugural session of the sixth parliament, elected in the February elections, which went into session Tuesday.

The daily quoted sources as saying the diplomats had not attended Tuesday's session "for practical and technical reasons."

"This is not a political gesture for or against any party," they added, despite the fact that the February polls were described as "flawed" by international observers.

Bangladesh: Dhaka Radio Reports on President's Parliament Speech

BK1903165796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Abdur Rahman Biswas said that the sixth parliament is going to begin its proceedings with the hope of resolving the country's political crisis through the enactment of the law required to amend the Constitution to form a neutral caretaker government.

The president was addressing the inaugural session of the sixth parliament at the Parliament House in Dhaka this evening. He told the house that the parliament has been elected through the 15 February election. The election was necessary to maintain constitutional continuity. This parliament, he said, has created an opportunity to hold another parliamentary election with the participation of all parties. He regretted that the major political parties did not participate in this election. The president called upon all political parties, irrespective of party affiliation and opinion, to come forward with a spirit of tolerance to strengthen democracy. People's participation should be ensured for the (?strengthening) of parliamentary democracy. He said that this sovereign parliament should be turned into a nerve center for resolving all He reminded the members that the path of democracy is very uneven and time consuming. Like other democratic countries, parliamentary democracy has developed and expanded in Bangladesh as well, and it is gradually moving toward success.

The president hoped that the members of the current parliament would rise above individual and party interests and give priority to the national interests for the sake of democracy and Constitutional continuity and in the interest of the country's peace and progress.

President Biswas gave a brief account of his recent talks with leaders of the major political parties, [words indistinct] chief justices, and eminent lawyers. He said that it has become evident to him after these meetings that the president has no constitutional power to resolve the fundamental issue on which the ruling and opposition parties are divided. The president has nothing to do to solve the current crisis if the ruling and opposition parties do not arrive at a consensus.

President Biswas said that, through a statement, he has already apprised the countrymen of the situation. The president also gave a brief account of the various programs for national development and the progress of their implementation.

On Bangladesh's foreign policy, the president said that Bangladesh is an equal partner in various activities for ensuring world peace, security and development, and the welfare of the world community. He said that Bangladesh is a copartner of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, Nonaligned Movement, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and international and regional development organizations, and it is very active

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in fulfilling its responsibility as a member of these organizations.

Earlier, after the afternoon prayers, Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali announced a panel of chairmen. Members of the panel are: Syed Manzur Hussain, Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, Ziaur Rahman, Selina Rahman, and Mohammad Shahmsul Haq. Later, five obituary resolutions expressing condolences over the death of five prominent parliamentarians were adopted unanimously. They died after the fifth parliament was dissolved. The house observed a minute's silence in memory of the departed leaders and offered prayers for the salvation of their souls.

Bangladesh: Government Asked To Stop Shooting People Like 'Game Birds'

BK2003114496 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 11 Mar 96 p 4

[Editorial: "This Must Stop"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] This must stop. This shooting down people as if they were game birds or clay pigeons at the shooting range. Whatever the provocation — police or other law-enforcing elements shall not shoot people engaged in any form of political demonstration, that is the instruction we, and believably the whole of this nation, seek of the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government. They haven't proved over the five years of their tenure particularly given to heeding counsel. But this present one is not so much a counsel. It is a demand. And they can ignore it only at their own peril.

About 70 persons have been shot dead by police or BDR [Bangladesh Rifles] personnel since the election-day eruption. The nation doesn't want anymore of it.

Ice has at last been broken and the national dialogue, the absence of which had pushed the nation to virtual ruination — materially and more importantly, in its society-sustaining socio-cultural sinews — is now on. Should the dialogue continue while the nation burns? Or could not the dialogue be made more meaningful and positively advancing towards a grand national reconciliation with the appropriate setting of a softened and helpful climate — with the cessation of a recourse to shooting and mass lathi [baton]-charge and teargassing?

But for this to have any significantly beneficent effect will necessarily take two sides — just as it takes two hands to clap. The opposition must call a respite to their continued asahajog [noncooperation]. It is their men who are being killed and it is state property — the people's very own property that their activists are destroying. They must contribute to the expectations from this dialogue by calling a halt to violent demonstrations.

The opposition has come to the ultimate in its arsenal — and which is also its last shot indeed. Why spend it foolishly? Keep it for the time, when you may need it more — and we all join you in praying that such a time never comes.

Bangladesh: President Swears In New 27-Member Cabinet

BK1903132296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 0955 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A new 27-member cabinet has been sworn in. President Abdur Rahman Biswas administered the oath to new ministers at a simple but attractive ceremony at the President House this morning. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia took the oath first. The prime minister and her cabinet had resigned earlier.

The new ministers are: A.S. M. Mustafizur Rahman, Mohammad Saifur Rahman, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Oli Ahmed, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Tariqul Islam, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Barrister Zamiruddin Sirkar, [names indistinct].

The new ministers of state are: Sadeq Hossain; Major Abdul Mannan, retired; Lutfur Rahman Khan; Professor Jahanara Begum, Mrs. Sarwari Rahman; Harun al Rashid; Fazlur Rahman; Mohammad Aminul Haq; Dr. Abdul Moin Khan; Shahjahan Seraj; Reza Mohammad; Maj. Hafizuddin Ahmad, retired; and Amanullah Aman.

Among others, the swearing-in ceremony was attended by prominent politicians, eminent citizens, judges, members of the diplomatic corps, and senior civil and military officers.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited the tomb of martyred President Ziaur Rahman and laid a wreath and said prayers there.

Bangladesh: Portfolios of New Cabinet Members Announced

BK1903132696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A new 27-member cabinet has been sworn in. President Abdur Rahman Biswas administered the oath to new ministers at a simple but impressive ceremony at the President House this morning. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia took the oath first. The prime minister along with her cabinet had resigned earlier.

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The new ministers and their portfolios are: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia — cabinet affairs, establishment, defense, special affairs, and primary and mass education; A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman — foreign affairs; Mohammad Saifur Rahman—finance; Abdus Salam Talukdar—local government, rural development, and cooperatives; Oli Ahmed—power, energy, and mineral resources; Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf—health and family planning; Tariqul Islam—post and telecommunications; Abdul Matin Chowdhury—communications; Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain—home affairs; Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian—education, science, and technology; Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan— agriculture, food and water resources; Barrister Zamiruddin Sirkar — law, justice, and parliamentary affairs; Abdullah Al Noman— fisheries and livestock, environment and forest; and Mirza Abbas— land [word indistinct] and public works.

The ministers of state and their portfolios are: Sadeq Hossain —youth and sports; Major Abdul Mannan, retired—civil aviation and tourism; Lutfur Rahman Khan—industry; Professor Jahanara Begum—cultural affairs; Mrs. Sarwari Rahman—women and children's affairs; Harun al Rashid—disaster management and relief; Fazlur Rahman—religious and social welfare affairs; Mohammad Aminul Haq— establishment and information; Dr. Abdul Moin Khan—planning; Shahjahan Seraj—water transport; Reza Mohammad—textiles and jute; Maj. Hafizuddin Ahmad, retired — commerce; and Amanullah Aman — education, science, and technology.

Among others, the swearing-in ceremony was attended by prominent politicians, eminent citizens, judges, members of the diplomatic corps, and senior civil and military officers.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited the tomb of martyred President Ziaur Rahman and laid a wreath and said prayers there. Cabinet ministers and ministers of state were also present.

Bangladesh: Draft Bill on Elections Under Caretaker Government Approved

BK2003124096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet has approved the draft of a bill containing several proposals in the Constitution for the holding of all general elections for parliament under a neutral caretaker government. The approval was given at a special cabinet meeting at the cabinet room in the prime minister's office today. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presided.

The meeting also approved the proposals to amend the Bank Deposit Insurance Ordinance, 1984, and the Gramin Bank Ordinance, 1983. The meeting was attended by ministers, ministers of state of various ministries, cabinet secretaries, secretary of the prime minister's office, and concerned secretaries.

Bangladesh: All Candidates for Parliament's Women Seats Elected

BK1703065896 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In accordance with the schedule announced by the Election Commission, 30 women candidates today filed nomination papers for election to the 30 parliament seats reserved for women. After scrutiny, all the nomination papers were found valid. As only one candidate filed the nomination for each seat, the returning officer declared each of the 30 candidates elected uncontested.

India

India: Pakistan Accused of Diverting Afghan Mercenaries to Kashmir

BK1703104796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister has accused Pakistan of diverting Afghan mercenaries to Jammu and Kashmir after the local militants turned toward path of peace. Mr. S.B. Chavan said India will never tolerate aggression and will give a befitting [words indistinct due to break in transmission] public meeting in Pondicherry after unveiling a bronze statue of former Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

Mr. Chavan said some countries were trying indirectly to persuade India to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty while supplying arms to Pakistan. He stressed the importance of stability under these conditions and called upon the people to remain vigilant against external and internal forces trying to destabilize the country.

The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, told newspersons in Jullundur that India has always tried to improve relations with Pakistan, but never got any positive response from the other side. Mr. Mukherjee said fundamentalism is not acceptable to a democratic society like India.

India: Sharma Turns Down Move To Issue Ordinances; Parties React

BK1903130396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president has conveyed to the prime minister that it would appear inappropriate to

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promulgate the ordinances proposed by the government at this juncture. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma said it would also be contrary to the canons of the constitutional provisions in view of the present circumstances. This was communicated when the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, called on the president in New Delhi today. The proposed ordinances include curtailment of election campaign period for the coming general elections and the reservation [of jobs] for scheduled caste [socially backward class] Christians.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] and BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Janata Dal have welcomed the decision of the president. The CPI-M, in a press release, said Dr. Sharma has acted in defense of parliamentary democracy. The Janata Dal leader, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, observed that the president has lived up to the high responsibilities cast upon his office by the constitution makers. The BJP spokesperson, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, said all opposition parties are against the tendency of the government issuing ordinances, especially on the eve of general elections.

Replying to queries from newsmen, the Congress-I spokesman, V.N. Gadgil, refused to comment on the president's decision, but said the government had no ulterior motive in wanting to shorten the poll campaigning period. He said the move was aimed at reducing election expenses of candidates.

India: Delhi Reports Details of Election Schedule

BK1903144096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The election commission has announced the poll schedule for the coming general elections and assembly polls in six states. Announcing the schedule, the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said in New Delhi this evening that the notification for the Lok Sabha elections will be issued on the 27th of this month. Dates of polls will be 27 April; 2, 7, and 21 May. He said the last date for filing nominations will be 3 April and the candidature can be withdrawn on the 6th of next month except in Nagaland, where it will be it will on 8 April. Scrutiny of the nomination papers will take place on 4 April.

India: Further on Schedule for National, State Elections

BK1903164296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The election commission has announced the schedule for the coming general elections and assembly polls for six states. The chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, said in New Delhi this evening that notifications for Lok Sabha elections will be issued on the 27th of this month. Dates for polls will be 27 April and 2, 7, and 21 May. He said the last date for filing nominations will be 3 April, and the names can be withdrawn on the 6th of next month—except in Nagaland, where it would be on 8 April. Scrutiny of the nomination papers will take place on 4 April.

Our correspondent Shyama Prasad reports on the poll schedule:

[Begin Shyama Prasad recording] The long-awaited poll schedule for the 11th Lok Sabha was announced today, after much speculation on poll date in the media. The election commission, before announcing the schedule for the largest democracy in the world, consulted all the recognized national and state political parties and had held wide-ranging discussion with the government officials both at the center and the state level.

Fifty-nine crore voters are expected to exercise their franchise in 810,000 polling stations all over the country. The Jammu and Kashmir, which went unrepresented in the 10th Lok Sabha, will go to the Lok Sabha poll this time to thank [as heard] people's representatives to the 11th Lok Sabha. [end recording]

That was a dispatch from our correspondent.

Mr. Seshan said all Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Pondicherry will go to the polls on the 27th of next month. Twenty-one Lok Sabha constituencies in Andhra Pradesh, 18 in Karnataka, 15 in Rajasthan, and 25 in Tamil Nadu will also have the polling on the same day. He said all Lok Sabha constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu will have polls on the 2 May. The same day polling will also be held in 24 Lok Sabha constituencies in Maharashtra, 12 in Gujarat, 30 in Uttar Pradesh, 20 in Madhya Pradesh, 20 in West Bengal, 12 in Orissa, 20 in Bihar, 10 in Rajasthan, 14 in Tamil Nadu, 21 in Andhra Pradesh, and 10 in Karnataka.

All Lok Sabha constituencies in Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura will go to the polls on 7 May. Twenty-four constituencies in Maharashtra, 14 in Gujarat, 55 in Uttar Pradesh, 20 in Madhya Pradesh, 22 in West Bengal, nine in Orissa, 34 in Bihar will also go to the polls on the same day. The election to the six Jammu and Kashmir Lok Sabha seats will be held on two days. While the voting will take place in three constituencies on 7 May, the remaining three seats will have polls on 21 May. The assembly polls in Assam, Haryana, Kerala, and Pondicherry will be held on a

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single day on 27 April. West Bengal and Tamil Nadu assembly elections will be held in two days. In Tamil Nadu, the polling will be held on 27 [April] and 2 May. In West Bengal, it will be held on 2 and 7 May.

The chief election commissioner has said elections for the state assemblies in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir will be taken up by the commission when the government communicates readiness to revoke President's rule there.

Referring to the counting schedule, he said in respect of all parliament and assembly constituencies where polling is scheduled to be held on 27 April and 2 May, counting will commence at 0800 on 8 May. In respect of all Lok Sabha constituencies in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, counting will commence at 0800 on 23 May. All other constituencies where voting is to take place on 7 May, counting will commence on 9 May. The poll process will be completed in all states, union territories, and national capital territory of Delhi except in Jammu and Kashmir on 14 May. In Jammu and Kashmir, it will be completed on 28 May.

The commission also announced the poll schedule for 14 assembly by-elections in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Orissa, and Karnataka. In Andhra Pradesh, by-elections will be held on 27 April and 2 May. In Bihar and Maharashtra, it will be held on 2 and 7 May. In Karnataka, by-election will be held on 27 April, in Meghalaya 2 May, and in Orissa on 2 and 7 May.

The three election commissioners said the moral code of conduct for political parties has come into force with immediate effect. They said the election commission will make all efforts to conduct free and fair polls.

India: BJP To Contest 475 Seats; Advani Alleges Media Misuse

BK1803025896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to contest 475 seats in the coming Lok Sabha elections. The party general secretary, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, told newsmen in Chandigarh today that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] would have seat adjustments with other parties in Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Bihar.

Addressing a press conference in Nasik today, the BJP president, Mr. L.K. Advani, demanded the setting up of a special cell in the Election Commission to monitor the electronic media. He alleged that the ruling party is misusing the government-controlled media.

India: Official Views Arrangements for Free, Fair Polls

BK2003052496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] About 1,800 companies of paramilitary forces will be deployed in the coming general elections and assembly polls in six states to ensure free and fair voting. This was stated by the election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy.

Talking to our correspondent in New Delhi, he said 59 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise. He said the commission will strictly enforce the model code of conduct in the elections and added that 1,500 central poll observers and 450 expenditure observers will be deputed to check irregularities and role of money power during the elections.

As reported general elections to 543-Lok Sabha seats and 914 [state] assembly constituencies in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam, West Bengal, Haryana, and Pondicherry will be simultaneously held in four phases on the 27th of April and the 2nd, 7th, and 21st of May. Jammu and Kashmir will also go for parliamentary elections along with other states. By-elections to 14 assembly constituencies in six states will also be held. A notification for the polls will be issued on the 27th of this month.

The Congress-I has welcomed the program for general elections announced by the Election Commission. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] said that elections to UP [Uttar Pradesh] assembly should also be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls. The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has said that they are happy over the announcement. The DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazagham] president, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, expressed satisfaction over the poll schedule.

India: Officials Welcome Talks With Kashmir Militant Leaders

BK2003052096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, has welcomed the dialogue between the center and some Kashmiri militant leaders to bring back normalcy in the state. Talking to newsmen in Jammu yesterday, he said such a dialogue should be held with all the groups willing to hold talks.

The state unit of the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has also welcomed the process of dialogue. In a statement in Jammu, the state secretary of the party, Mohammad Yusuf Taregami, said the dialogue should

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be extended to various other groups, political parties and militant organizations.

India: Kashmiri Leaders 'Generally' Welcome Lok Sabha Election

BK2003100096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission's decision to hold Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir along with the rest of the country has been generally welcomed in the state. The Jammu and Kashmir Congress-I general secretary, Mr. Mangat Ram Sharma and the Janata Dal leader, Mr. Dhanraj Bagotra, said that elections to the state assembly should also be held along with the Lok Sabha polls. District Congress-I committees in the state are meeting today to recommend a panel of names of the candidates for the six Lok Sabha seats.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] secretary, Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Taregami, welcomed the elections saying that these can be a means to end the suffering of the people in the state. He urged the people to take part fully in the elections.

The state unit BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. Chaman Lal Gupta, said that though his party feels that conditions are not conducive for elections, it would participate and contest all the six Lok Sabha seats.

Former chief minister and president of the National Conference, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, said that his party is not against elections. He said his party's working committee will meet in Jammu on Tuesday [26 March] to decide about contesting the elections.

As already reported, the Election Commission yesterday announced that parliamentary elections, as well as assembly polls in six states, will be held on the 27th of April and the 2d, the 7th and 21st of May. The notification for the Lok Sabha elections will be issued on Wednesday next.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0908 GMT on 20 March reports that Muslim separatists campaigning for an end to Indian rule in Kashmir vowed on Wednesday to "sabotage" the general elections scheduled for May.

[AFP reports: "Most separatist groups said they would also boycott the staggered polls to elect the six parliament seats from the northern state. Three of the seats will go to the hustings on May 7 and three more on May 21.

["The warning came a day after India's independent Election Commission announced dates for a four-phased parliamentary elections, saying Kashmir would vote on the last two dates of the schedule."

[AFP adds: "'We will boycott the elections,' asserted Umar Farooq, chairman of an umbrella forum of nearly 30 Muslim separatist and political groups battling for self-rule in Kashmir since 1989.

["Farooq, who is also Kashmir's chief priest, said the forum would discuss its anti-election strategies, but warned there was already a consensus against the voting.

["'Tripartite talks (between India, Pakistan and Kashmiris) are the only solution (to the Kashmir problem),' he said in this summer capital of Kashmir. 'Kashmiris are fighting for self-determination, and that is our goal.'"

[AFP also adds: "'So many elections have been held in Kashmir since India's independence in 1947 ... Did they solve the Kashmir problem?' Farooq asked, in reference to the campaign raging in the state against Indian rule."]

India: Commentary Notes Prospects for Peace in Kashmir

BK1903150096 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Commentary by M.K. Dhar: "Give Peace a Chance in the Kashmir Valley"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ice was at last broken in Kashmir valley. The militants and the central government have started negotiating to resolve the thorny issue by peaceful means and dialogue. The militants have shown courage in ignoring Pakistan's call for continuation of terrorism in the name of religion and severing their links with the ruthless Hurriyat Conference in order to stop the unfortunate valley from bleeding further. They wielded the gun for years, causing carnage and arson on an unprecedented scale and (?poured) untold suffering and misery on the people of Kashmir. Having realized at last that they had been used by Pakistan as tools to bring about Kashmir's accession and to destabilize India, they have said farewell to arms and started negotiating with the union home minister.

They have realized that terrorism never pays and the forces of reason and ethnic harmony ultimately triumph. They have made a few demands whose fulfillment, according to them, would create a very congenial atmosphere for restoration of peace and normalcy in the valley and resolution of the problem. The home minister has shown statesmanship by referring these demands to a high-powered three- member committee which will visit the valley on Thursday. Mr. Chavan (?observed) a distinct change in the attitude of the militants, who have realized that the gun culture would not solve their

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problems. He himself will visit the state to contribute to the efforts to bring about normalcy and take the task of rehabilitation. The militants said that they had come with a lot of hope. Their primary concern was to mitigate the hardships, sufferings, and misery of the people of the valley.

A large number of people were sitting on the fence watching and waiting for the outcome of the initiative taken by them. From the very start of militancy, it has been the government's stand that it is willing to discuss the legitimate demands of the people within the framework of the Indian constitution and attend to their economic problems such as industrialization and employment. This duty devolves on any democratic government by virtue of the mandate to government given to it by the people. [sentence as heard] At the same time it also is the constitutional responsibility of the government to preserve law and order, put down secessionism and terrorism with a firm hand, and preserve the country's territorial integrity.

The militants have realized that by playing Pakistan's game they have only brought death and destruction upon their own people. And now when local mercenaries are not available, Pakistan is sending foreign Islamic crusaders to Kashmir without regard to the consequences. As a foreign militant who fought in the Afghan war, Mahaz-i-Azadi leader, Azam Inquilabi, put it, if the present situation continued, the valley would soon be flooded by men from Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province [and] Balochistan and Afghanistan and in course of time Kashmir's ethnic character will completely change and genuine Kashmiris will become extinct.

The target of the militants and the foreign mercenaries are as much the security forces as Kashmiri Muslims who are subjected to extortion, torture, and molestation. This is what has finally opened the eyes of the militants who want to safe their life and the honor of their women. In the past few months, several counterinsurgency outfits have sprung up who are asserting the right of the Kashmiris to live in peace and honor. The number of militants killed by the security forces has gone up considerably and hundreds of terrorists have surrendered having realized the futility of their ways and also that they would be found out any way. A combination of all these factors has brought about a change in the valley and there is hope that the problems of the people will be addressed to further strengthen the antimilitant forces and fear removed from the minds of the people. The governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K.V. Krishna Rao, has revealed that there are indications from some more militants about their willingness to hold talks with the center and they have expressed the desire to resolve the issue through peaceful negotiations. They had not succeeded in either separating Kashmir from the country or getting independence. They realized there were only two options for them — either to get killed in the engagements with the security forces or to come to their senses and surrender. There is indeed hope that the rest of the militants will heed the advice, give up the gun culture, and adopt the constitutional path to seek redress of their grievances.

Iran

Iran: Rafsanjani Addresses Iranians Abroad on New Year

LD2003125196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has sent a message to Iranians living abroad. Extending his congratulations on the auspicious Nowruz and the New Year, he expressed his thanks for the care and compassion toward Islamic Iran by the dear compatriots living abroad.

According to the Central News Unit, the president underlined the need to strengthen ties with the homeland and the need to safeguard the values and cultural heritage of Iran for future generations as well as for the children of the nation living away from the homeland and described them as a great investment of the country abroad.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed the independence, the technical and scientific abilities, and the political strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran and called on Iranians residing abroad to find out about the noticeable advances made by their country. He called on them to strengthen their sacred links with the homeland, despite their being under the negative propaganda of the arrogant empire.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, in his message described the fundamental differences between the Iran of today and the past, as well as the daily advances made in science, industry, and culture, adding: In the past, we encouraged Iranians abroad to take part in imports to Iran and gave them some concessions. However, today the reverse applies; we are calling on you to receive concessions for Iran's exports.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani spoke of the existing political freedom in the country, describing the glorious organization of elections for the fifth term of the Islamic Consultative Majles, the participation of nearly 25 million Iranians in the elections and their freedom in choosing their representatives as the latest example of this political freedom.

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He said that the massive 11 February [anniversary of revolution] rallies were a clear sign proving that people remained faithful to the system and the Islamic revolution. He emphasized: Be proud of being soldiers of your country so that under the shadow of the self-sacrifice of our dear ones, who through their jihad eliminated the threat to our nation, you will achieve the great blessings of God based on the Koranic and Islamic ethics.

Iran: Diplomat Accuses U.S. of Seeking To Topple Regime

MM1903151696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Iranian Diplomat Accuses Washington of Working To Topple Regime"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's bureau in Beirut received yesterday a statement issued by Ghazanfar Asl Rukn-Abadi, first secretary at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, accusing the U.S. Administration of working to topple the regime in Iran. The statement said: "Media reports say that the U.S. Congress has recently endorsed two bills which have been approved by the U.S. Administration to toughen the economic embargo imposed on Iran and to set a budget totaling $20 million to carry out secret and subversive actions against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He said that "this measure — as mentioned in the proposal submitted by the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives — is aimed at toppling the current regime in the Islamic Republic of Iran. But U.S. officials say at present that they intend to put pressure on the Iranian authorities to force them to change their policy. The bill includes a proposal to support the Iranian opposition and to encourage the emergence of new opposition groups."

The statement added that "the step on which the U.S. Administration has embarked represents blatant violation of the principle of noninterference in other countries' affairs, a principle endorsed by international legitimacy. This principle is also consolidated in international conventions and treaties such as the UN Charter and the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly.

"In so doing the U.S. Administration has violated Clause I of the Algiers declaration of 1981, under which the administration pledged not to interfere militarily or politically, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The statement said that, in view of the importance of this issue, the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has sent a letter to the UN secretary general, informing him of the U.S. Administration's violation of its international commitments and calling for this letter to be distributed to UN member states and retained as an official document at the organization.

Iran: Commentary on Tehran's Response to German Warrant

LD1903182396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1600 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The cabinet, in its last session of the year 1374 [1996], stated that the warrant issued by Germany's prosecutor to arrest a senior state official of our country is unacceptable and baseless. [passage omitted]

Experts believe that the warrant is not legally valid. However, the political motives behind it will definitely affect the two countries' relations. The statement of the Islamic Republic of Iran's cabinet is, therefore, serious and decisive. That is, the Iranian government is not content with the remarks made by the German authorities on the continuation of ties between Tehran and Bonn, and it is asking that the German Government should bear in mind the two countries' interests and should take steps to remedy the situation.

It is unacceptable that at a time when German territory has become a haven for the [Iranian opposition] terrorists and bomb-planters, the German judiciary accuses Iranian officials of terroristic actions. The [Iranian] terrorists in Germany have repeatedly and explicitly confessed to their crimes and are clear examples of the most barbaric and ruthless acts of terrorism. There is no evidence to substantiate the claim that Iran has been involved in any of the alleged acts [of terrorism], but there are hundreds of existing cases against the crimes of the mini-groups in Iran and Europe. [passage omitted]

The German judicial system is well aware that members of the mini-groups have been tried in several European countries on charges of murdering their own colleagues. Some of them are still awaiting trial in European courts. However, thanks to the influence exerted by Zionism on the world news media, a major part of the mini-groups' acts of terrorism and corruption is not divulged. The record of physical elimination of the mini-group members by their comrades cannot be denied. After suffering a defeat in the Mersad operations during the last year of the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war, many of the hypocrite [Mojahedin-e Khalq] members were disillusioned with their leaders. Realizing the filthy

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nature of their leadership cadre, many of the mini-group members decided to abandon the grouplet. This led to some inter-factional crisis and instances of physical elimination.

At any rate, as the cabinet of the Islamic Republic of Iran said: If the German judicial system sets a precedent by accusing and condemning officials of other countries, many of the German officials — who have played a part in providing a refuge and facilities to the criminals and bomb-planters — must face trial and condemnation.

Iran: Tehran Radio Views Progress, U.S. Embargo

NC2003115696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a few hours, the year 1374 [year beginning 21 March 1995] with all its vicissitudes, will come to an end and the new year will begin for our industrious and revolutionary people.

The past year was heralded with the Nowruz message by the great leader of the revolution, on the need for social justice, organization, and discipline in all financial matters and work for the people and the officials. In following these valuable words by his eminence, the policy of controlling and stabilizing prices, to prevent pressure from inflation over the lower income groups of the society, were incorporated in the government's agenda in the first few months of the year. With the stabilizing of foreign exchange parity rates and the elimination of the black market, the way was paved for stability in work, economic activity, and investment.

Precise adherence to discipline in foreign exchange allocations, and making it mandatory for exporters to return the foreign exchange earned from exports, resulted in raising the balance of the country's foreign trade by a surplus of $4.7 billion in the fall season. It also enhanced the international credibility of our economy. Similarly, with core installations becoming operational, and a quantum leap in the field of parent industries, agricultural and industrial production did not encounter any stagnation despite all the straits, and at times gloomy and bitter predictions, and slowly but surely continued its consistent growth.

This favorable phenomenon, which is an indication of economic independence and maturity, is more significant in view of the fact that in the month of Khordad [21 May-20 June], the domineering U.S. government—continuing its hostility against the Islamic Republic of Iran—implemented a multi-faceted economic embargo against our country, which even its allies responded to negatively. However, even if there had been the necessary concurrence of other countries—in view of the prosperity of the Iranian economy, and the growth in its capabilities and production capacity—it would have achieved nothing.

The approval of the budget for the next year by the Islamic Majles was another momentous event of 1374. In this budget, the recommendations of the great leader for strengthening social justice, eliminating deprivation, and establishing economic discipline and organization were given top priority.

In addition, the completion of employment-generating projects—which provide swift feedback, boosting the social welfare and general insurance systems, formulating plans for combating the country's economic embargo, and new international conditions were emphasized in the budget. However, the most important distinction of this budget was that 42 percent of the entire budget was allocated for development expenditures. This is unprecedented in the history of the country in the past 30 years.

The fervent and enthusiastic convocation of the elections for the fifth term of the Islamic Majles in Esfand [19 February-20 March] in 1374, and the extensive presence of the people in the 11 February marches and Jerusalem day were among the most salient political events in our country not confined to internal dimensions. They proved to the world the Iranian people's support to the system and their participation in the various political and social areas are becoming greater and more extensive daily—contrary to the propaganda by colonialist loudspeakers—and the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its reliance on this repository of popular strength, will never succumb to hegemonists.

With an optimistic outlook and bright horizons before us, we forge ahead to welcome the new year, and with days replete with effort and endeavor, blessings and abundance, we beseech God Almighty for his bounties for our dear compatriots.

Iran: Radio Comments on Recent Meetings on Bosnia-Herzegovina

AU1903140396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Serbo-Croatian 1730 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary: "The Geneva Conference"; from the VIRI External Service program for "Bosnian" speakers]

[FBIS Translated Text] The representatives of the western Contact Group, the European Union, the United

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Nations, and the three state officials from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia today gathered at the negotiating table in Geneva. The meeting was convened at the initiative of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who insists on maintaining pressure on the signatories of the Bosnia-Herzegovina peace agreement to ensure its complete implementation.

They discussed the results achieved thus far by the civilian authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina in cooperation with IFOR [Implementation Force]. The U.S. State Department takes the view that the peace process has begun in Bosnia and that it facilitates the implementation of the Dayton provisions referring to the civilian matters.

In contrast to them, the Bosnian representatives in Geneva are stressing the numerous unfulfilled obligations that are hindering the further implementation of the agreement.

International political observers consider today's meeting in Geneva as an important and necessary (?move) by the U.S. diplomacy following the failure of the conference recently held in Ankara. Last week, the representatives of 28 countries gathered in Ankara at the invitation of the United States in order to express [words indistinct] plan for the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina and help financially the U.S. project of equipping and training the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The leading European countries did not receive the U.S. initiative with approval, as had been expected, because the initiative did not tally with the European vision.

Nevertheless, the three important international meetings that have been held in Ankara, Sarajevo, and today in Geneva have very quickly [words indistinct] the quickest possible and complete denouement of the Bosnian crisis. The influence that the influential countries have on Croatia and Serbia, that is, on the Croats and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina — who are still the most to blame for the delays in the implementation of the agreed points of the peace agreement for (?Bosnia-Herzegovina) — could contribute to this.

Russia has refused to appear in Geneva today and has described the meeting as useless and unimportant. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov has sent a message to Christopher that his country will take part in the next round of Geneva talks scheduled for 23 March. [words indistinct] Bosnian Serbs to recognize the Government in Sarajevo and start to cooperate with it. [words indistinct] the differences are evident in [word indistinct] between the United States and its European allies, who do not entirely agree with the U.S. (?plans) for [words indistinct] the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army.

All in all, there will be plenty more work at the negotiating table [words indistinct] people in the country have been assured that peace has indeed begun.

Iran: Paper Responds to Reader's Message on Economic Problems

LD1903144796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Mar 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Reader's phone message] I am about 40 years old, and since the revolution, I have only taken part in the elections of 1358 [year beginning 21 March 1979], and the elections for the fifth term on the recommendation of yourselves and friends. However, unfortunately, yesterday I read that in his news conference, the president said we have no acute economic, culture, etc, problems in the country. He also called left-wing groups extremists and left it up to the people to take part in the election. I am now 100 percent sorry for having taken part in the election and hold you and those who think like you responsible. Please explain.

[SALAM] When political groups in their publications (except those publications which lack moral fiber or competence and are solely experts at mud-slinging) freely criticize the president and his programs, they should in return be able to take what he [Rafsanjani] says about them. About the economic situation, he [Rafsanjani] relies on statistics, but reads about the economy as he sees it, so he sees the situation as good. And according to the way he reads it, he is right. For example, in the figures for the country's total budget, the sums allocated to health, education, and other sectors are more than in the past. But if we regard the economic situation on the basis of the figures for the distribution of income and those who are below the poverty line, we naturally see that income is not fairly distributed and the gap between the poor and the rich has widened; the burden on certain classes is greater than in the past; add to that the gap between expectations and the extent of their realization.

Unfortunately, during the past eight years, to control all the avenues of power and to eliminate certain political elements in the country, the ruling faction has resorted to propaganda to raise expectations to a level higher than its own capability and even greater than the country's nominal and operational capacity. And since it could not (and it was obvious from the start that it would not be able to) realize those expectations of society, therefore, its relative and small successes came under question.

According to the propaganda, the problems in the first decade of the revolution were neither brought about by the war, nor were they a result of the downfall of the

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previous regime and the building of a new one, nor due to the revolutionary elements' lack of qualification in all aspects of planning, execution, and legislation, but all the shortages, failures, and shortcomings in certain areas were entirely the fault of a particular faction of the revolution, which was in charge of a considerable portion of the affairs during the lifetime of his holiness the Imam [Khomeyni]; and that if they were eliminated from the scene, everything would change at once and social justice would soar to such heights that the country would become the promised paradise, or at least like Switzerland!

According to their propaganda, it was as if no one from the right wing had any involvement in affairs during that decade (the first decade); or if they had any responsibility anywhere, it was at a low level; or if there were failures in that sector, it was still the fault of the rival left-wing elements.

Of course, the right wing considers the rival faction responsible only for the problems in the first decade and not for the huge and amazing successes in that period. [passage omitted]

In short, with their confusing propaganda, they raised the level of expectations to such a degree that even if, based on figures, they achieve the slightest success, people like that dear reader would regard them with doubt and denial.

Iran: Alliance With Syria Called 'Strained'

96LH0114A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 12 Jan 96 pp 28-29

[Reports by Safa' Ha'iri from Paris and Ryad I'm-al-Din from London]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran has "torpedoed" its relations with Syria following the progress made in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations, and this is threatening to cause a flare up on the southern Lebanese front. What is the reason for the Iranian move? What interest does Iran have in torpedoing its relations with Syria? Our correspondents in Paris, London, and Beirut answered these questions in the following two reports:

It is not the first time that the "distinctive relations" between Syria and Iran, which have led to the establishment of a strategic alliance between them, have passed through a strained period. However, this is undoubtedly the first time that they have reached this acute point. This is also the first time Tehran openly has initiated an atmosphere of hostility toward Damascus through an organized media campaign unprecedented in its ferocity.

Officially, the mullahs have tried to hint that the reason for their anger against their Syrian ally — the only ally they have in the Arab and Middle Eastern arenas — was Syria's support for the statement issued by the Damascus Declaration states' foreign ministers. This statement supported the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] right to its three islands — Abu Musa, Tanb al-Kubra, and Tanb al-Sughra — which Iran has occupied, and called on Tehran to return the islands to their legitimate owner.

However, experts in Iranian affairs say that Iran's excuse for its campaign against Damascus is very flimsy because Syria has always supported the UAE's right to the three islands. Iran has never before been angry — at least openly — with Syria for its support as it was this time.

Observers add another reason for the Iranian campaign. The Iranian regime has begun to criticize Syria's decision to resume its negotiations with the Jewish state. Even in this respect, the reason does not seem convincing because Iran has often affirmed, through its Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, that it will never end its strategic relations with Syria, even if Damascus officially recognizes the Zionist entity.

So, what serious development has taken place to make Tehran open its trumpets against Damascus? What has prompted Tehran to cancel a very important official visit from Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi as head of a high-level delegation that included the foreign minister scheduled 2 January in Damascus?

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has learned from well-informed Iranian sources that there are reasons for Iran's very fierce campaign against Syria, which the mullahs regard as fateful to the future of the Islamic revolution. The sources affirmed to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI that a sharp disagreement broke out between the two strategic allies. The Syrians sent a serious warning to Iran and Hizballah concerning the recent operations the Islamic Resistance carried out from southern Lebanon against northern Israel. These sources said that the Syrian warning has angered the mullahs. Tehran considered this warning unacceptable because of its sharp tone. Syria demanded that Hizballah and Iran coordinate with Damascus before any operation is carried out from Lebanese territory against Israel in the future.

The Syrians apparently were very unhappy about the recent Katyusha attacks, which Hizballah carried out against the will of Damascus. The Syrians were even more unhappy because the recent operations coincided, in a very noticeable and suspicious way, with the re-

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sumption of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations near Washington.

Some people, who knew about Hizballah's recent operations, said that Iran was behind them because it wanted to torpedo the Maryland negotiations or at least obstruct them to delay the achievement of an agreement even if this would embarrass its Syrian ally, as an Arab diplomat in Washington said.

Observers noticed that the campaign launched by the Iranian progovernment press was characterized by unprecedented ferocity and hostility against Syria. The ABRAR newspaper, which usually reflects the opinion of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani 's government, published a strongly worded article on 30 December in which it criticized Syria for accepting U.S. hegemony and forgetting its old friends and allies. The paper said that Syria has submitted to the policies of the United States and the Zionist regime, which want to cause division between the Arabs and Muslims.

The paper added that Damascus was apparently planning to change its policy in the area and forget its old friends. ABRAR said that Iran is against the peace process. It thinks that the closer an Arab state draws to Israel, the further away it slips from Iran.

More radical Iranian newspapers, such as KAYHAN, which is controlled by the Intelligence Ministry [as published], have joined the campaign against Syria. They attacked it for its position on the dispute between the UAE and Iran and the peace negotiations.

The Iranian Consultative Assembly also joined the coordinated campaign against Syria. Some deputies called on the government to demand that Syria pay back its debt of $5 billion, and interest, to Iran. This debt is the result of oil shipments Tehran has "donated" to Damascus, at very low prices, to compensate for the losses it suffered when Saddam Husayn decided to close the Iraqi oil pipeline to punish Syria for supporting Iran during the Iraqi-Iranian war.

Observers think that what happened between Tehran and Damascus is very serious and could herald the beginning of the end of the strategic alliance between the two countries and change the balances of power in the region. The observers, however, expressed surprise that Iran has initiated this campaign against Syria at a time when the mullahs' regime was at its weakest state and when Syria was reinforcing its position and role in the region; that is, at a time when Iran was more in need of an alliance with Syria.

In the opinion of these observers, Tehran's hostile position reflects the mullahs' alarm and the conflicts that have intensified among the regime's leaders, who are afraid about their revolution's future and isolation. It seems that this unprecedented crisis, which Tehran created with Damascus, reflects the profound differences that exist between the president and Revolution Leader Khamene'i. According to Iranian reports, Khamene'i was the one who organized this hostile campaign against Syria. Sources close to Damascus affirm that despite the government's opposition to the resumption of the negotiations between Syria and Israel, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani sent a secret message of support to his Syrian counterpart and even asked that, in return, he intervene with Washington to ease its hostile campaign against Iran.

However, the radical and more hardline trend in Tehran had apparently decided to go on the offensive and escalate the confrontation to deal with its international isolation and the U.S. plan to tighten the blockade on Iran. The leader of the Revolution 'Ali Khamene'i is championing this policy. He has gathered the hardliners in Iran and Lebanon around him. 'Ali Larejani, propaganda chief and member of the Supreme National Security Council, who is close to Khamene'i, has been promoting this hardline policy. Hezbollah supporters in Iran last week organized large demonstrations outside the UN offices in Tehran and clearly threatened to spread terrorism in the world. As we know, Ahmed Jannati, a prominent aid to the revolution leader, is the leader of this radical fundamentalist organization.

The Iranians, especially the mullahs, have undoubtedly been alarmed by the recent U.S. campaign, manifested in Senator D'Amato's bill to impose U.S. sanctions against any foreign oil company dealing with Iran, to allocate $20 million to support the Iranian opposition and Washington's appeal to the Western countries to tighten the blockade on Iran. The alarm increased following reports that the CIA was asked to try to overthrow the regime in Tehran, although the recent budget did not reflect request. The Americans want to prevent Iran from obtaining oil revenues. The U.S. measures have definitely escalated the situation, as manifested in Hezbollah's demonstrations and the call on the revolution leader to give Hezbollah the green light to make any place in the world unsafe for Americans.

According to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI's information, leaders of the hardline wing in Tehran chose to start the confrontation from Lebanon before deciding to spread terrorism to the world. The recent Iranian-backed operations in southern Lebanon reflected the mullahs' decision to embark on this confrontation, even at the cost of breaking their strategic alliance with Damascus.

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Since the beginning of last month, Lebanese sources have monitored suspicious movements by Hizballah leaders and intensive activity along the Tehran-Beirut line. Reports affirm that 'Imad Mughanniyah has arrived in Lebanon, with an Iranian shaykh and a military expert, carrying a new action plan supported by Ayatollah Khamene'i. During the past few weeks, Hizballah institutions, particularly the consultative council, witnessed a series of secret meetings in Harat Hurayk. The participants in these meetings were security and political leaders, who tow the line of the Iranian wing in Hizballah. Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah was excluded from these meetings because he supports the theory that if jihad is not exercised in the right place, it would be tantamount to suicide and would harm the Muslim interest. Fadlallah also supports a temporary truce until the possibilities of jihad in other forms become clear. Security reports revealed that Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah, who is known to be very close to Khamene'i; Shaykh Muhammad Ra'd; 'Abd-al-Hadi Hammadi, a senior Hizballah security official; Ibrahim 'Aqil; and some regional security commanders attended these meetings. Iranian Shaykh Hasan Mahdavi; Shaykh Na'imi, official in charge of Iranian external operations in Lebanon; and Reza 'Asakir, commander of the Revolutionary Guard Forces in Lebanon also participated in all these meetings. They worked out the details of the plan sent by Tehran and made some changes and reappointments in Hizballah's security department. They promoted the commanders of the military regions in southern Lebanon who support the Iranian hardline policy. These commanders were given primary responsibilities under the direct supervision of Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers. The security reports said that the Iranians presented military studies about new resistance plans in the south and changes in military tactics to escalate the confrontation with the Israeli occupation forces, launch suicide attacks, and intensify the shelling against Israel.

According to these reports, the Iranian envoys went to Ba'labakk and al-Biqa' and held several meetings with former Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli. The Iranians assured him of their confidence and their dependence on him and on his role in Hizballah. We have learned that other mobilization meetings were held in some camps of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command, led by Ahmad Jibril, particularly in the Dayr al-Ghazal and Zaynun Camps. They held contacts in the South with the leaders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Organization and other Palestinian opposition groups in 'Ayn al-Hulwah and al-Rashidiyah Camps, which receive support from Iran.

During its meetings, the Iranian delegation emphasized the need to activate the Islamic resistance and establish a military command for the pro-Iranian parties, organizations, and groups. Meanwhile, security reports revealed that Iran has increased its supply of weapons to Hizballah and its supporters in Lebanon. These weapons included RPG's, Katyushas, and TOW rockets. These weapons were moved from secret stores in the south in station wagon and funeral vehicles. Iran has apparently increased its arms supplies to Hizballah for fear that a Syrian-Israeli agreement would stop this supply bridge.

Features of the Iranian plan became clearer after Hizballah launched its rocket attacks against northern Israel. These attacks took place at a very sensitive time for Syria. Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' called for quiet. Damascus summoned leaders of this fundamentalist party to convey this message to them. Observers think that Iran is fully aware of the importance of its strategic alliance with Syria. It used the Lebanese situation and the Hizballah card in the past for maneuvering. Pressure also increased on it in the past, but without exposing its alliance with Syria to danger. However, the recent developments, particularly Tehran's isolation, have prompted the radicals to retaliate in Lebanon and even to jeopardize Iran's strategic alliance. In the past, Iran regarded Hizballah as its first defense line. However, now Hizballah has become Iran's first and last defense line for action outside its borders. Tehran has discovered that, in practice, it only has the Hizballah card. It is true that the new Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah al-Shalah is close to Tehran, but the recent developments on the Palestinian arena and 'Arafat's policy have isolated the Islamic Jihad, which no longer has a margin for maneuver to serve Tehran's goals. Iran has not completely dominated the Hamas Movement, which still maintains its independence, particularly in trying to avoid a Palestinian civil war. The mullahs have realized that if a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement is reached, their regime will be the only enemy of peace left in the region. Tehran will also be isolated and its role as a regional power will be ignored in any international order. Therefore, the mullahs have decided to play their last card to torpedo the "treasonous" peace plan to protect the Islamic revolution.

Can Iran implement its plan in Lebanon and move away from Syria? This is the question which is being asked, with some concern, among Hizballah's leaders. These leaders are afraid of the serious consequences of such an Iranian adventure. They are afraid that it could lead to a split in Hizballah and a liquidation war between the party's leaders and trends. Hizballah's leaders are aware that the pro-Iranian wing could have a margin for maneuver in the immediate future and could

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continue its operations. They think that Damascus has no interest in offering Hizballah's card to Israel before a tangible agreement is reached. However, the countdown has definitely started. The more progress is made in the negotiations, the less the Syrians would be tolerant toward Iranian activity in Lebanon.

Iran: Airport Official on Improvements

96LA0160A Tehran PARVAZ in Persian
21 Jan-19 Feb 96 pp 22, 23

[Report on interview with Qorban'ali Chegunian, general manager of Mehrabad Airport, by unidentified interviewer; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The operation of the new tower and radar of Mehrabad Airport, the implementation of the transit project, the development of the transit of Terminal 2, the building of a hotel, the installation of a connecting bridge between the terminal and the airplane, the building of a special terminal for the entry and exit of goods, and strengthening flight equipment and airport facilities are among the most important projects under way at Mehrabad Airport.

Qorban'ali Chegunian, the general manager of Mehrabad Airport, explained the projects under way at the Mehrabad Airport in an exclusive interview, and, regarding the most important focus of the Second Developmental Plan in the area of air transport as planning for strengthening international transportation, especially at the Imam Khomeyni Airport, he added: Training expert manpower, purchasing and installation of needed advanced equipment, and ratification and implementation of laws suitable for an advanced air transport industry are among the steps completed at the Imam Khomeyni Airport.

Stating that by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, the number of passengers in the total air transportation of the country should reach from the present 7 million to 12 million people, Chegunian described the role of Mehrabad Airport in transporting this number of passengers as important and added: To serve a larger number of passengers during the Second Developmental Plan and reach more than 80 percent growth in the number of passengers, we must have planning and capacities suitable to our needs.

He emphasized: To achieve this by the end of the Second Plan, flight factors, terminals, allocated roads, airport systems and equipment, and internal facilities of the terminals are expanding from year to year in order to reach the projected level and be able to serve a large number of passengers.

Implementation of the Transit Plan

The general manager of Mehrabad Airport referred to the transit plan for this airport and, stating that soon the first group of foreign travelers will enter Iran, said: With the coordination that has been done with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 48-hour visas will be issued for transit passengers. He expressed hope that the continuation of this movement will create a change regarding the laws and increase the speed of the entry and exit of passengers, and added: Creating airport facilities to attract more foreign transit flights and passengers is among the most important policies of the national air transport industry.

He continued: At the present, with an announcement to the passenger airline companies, we are ready to admit transit passengers, and in the second phase, by creating suitable facilities, we shall also give service to transit flights.

He regarded the preparation for accepting transit flights as having flight component and suitable guiding and navigational equipment, simple customs and passport regulations, competitive prices for fuel compared to neighboring countries, issuance of visas for a few hours, and having emergency airplane repair centers and expressed hope that by strengthening these factors at Mehrabad Airport, and especially the Imam Khomeyni International Airport, Tehran will become a center of air transport industry in the region.

Chegunian emphasized: Certainly, the implementation of the transit plan at the airport, in addition to strengthening the tourism industry, will also have an effect on the foreign currency revenues.

Operation of the New Tower and Radar

The general manager of Mehrabad Airport explained the most important projects underway at this airport and, referring to the construction of the new tower and radar of Mehrabad, said: This radar, which will have an amazing effect on controlling flights and ensuring their safety, will most likely be inaugurated on some occasion at the end of the year.

He added: Preparations have been made for the installation of the purchased equipment by building a new control tower and radar site at the airport.

Chegunian announced the cost of procurement of the equipment to be 150 billion rials [R] and added: A total of R160 billion has been invested in this project, calculating the construction of the tower, radar site, and buildings.

He said that this radar will help control air traffic and expedite the landing and take-off of airplanes and added:

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The equipment and radar will cover a large radius of the Tehran operational space.

Expansion of Terminal 2

The general manager of Mehrabad Airport emphasized the necessity of expanding Terminal No. 2 and said: The construction operation for a small transit hotel with 15 suites, 45 square meters each, for foreign transit passengers who layover in Iran for 10 to 12 hours has begun and will become operational early next year.

He announced the cost of the construction of this hotel—that is provided by private sector investments—at R1.2 billion and added: In this hotel, 15 duty-free stores with various goods and Iranian handicrafts will be created.

The general manager of the airport mentioned the installation of connecting bridges between Terminal 2 and the airplanes as one of the other developmental projects of this terminal and said: The ground breaking for the implementation of this project will be this year, and the operations will be completed in 18 months.

He emphasized: With the implementation of this project, several flights will be admitted to the airport and passengers will leave the airport simultaneously.

Creation of Cargo Terminals

Emphasizing the importance of a cargo terminal (a terminal that is designated for the entry and exit of cargo) at the airport, Chegunian said: Construction operations for a cargo terminal are now under way, and this project will reach operation in the middle of next year.

He announced the cost of the implementation of this project as R6 billion and, pointing out that 90 percent of air transportation in Iran comes through the Tehran airport, said: The existence of a cargo terminal at the airport, because it will operate round the clock, will increase the speed of the import and export of goods and in this way, like other airports in the country, the access of passengers to the passenger terminals will be separated from the cargo sector.

Development of Green Space

The general manager of Mehrabad Airport described the development project for the green space of the airport as unique, and, pointing out that at the present 30 hectares of green space exist in the airport, of which 20 hectares is between the two flight strips, he added: The green space of the airport will increase to 36 hectares by the end of the year.

He mentioned the strengthening of communication and the radar station, improving the navigational equipment, development of the duty-free stores in the foreign flight transit terminals, and improving the appearance of the terminals in accordance with Islamic models as among other projects of Mehrabad Airport and said: The mosques and prayer rooms of the airport were reconstructed employing Islamic architectural principles.

The general manager of Mehrabad Airport announced the opening of a special place for receiving passengers, the creation of a trade and commercial terminal, and the operation of multi-level parking among the most important tasks that have been completed at the airport and expressed hope that with the strengthening of the air equipment, as much as possible, the air transportation industry of the country will expand day by day.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Defense Minister Claims 'State of Alert' With India

BK2003083096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 20 Mar 96 p 12

[Article by Ahmar Mustikhan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Pakistan's Defence Minister Aftab Shaba'an Mirani has said that it is incorrect to say that Pakistan and India are engaged in a war of proxies as the correct term would be that the two sides were in a state of alert.

Talking informally with this correspondent at a private lunch on Tuesday, Mr. Mirani said that the course of events had changed the world first from multipolar to bipolar and then from bipolar to unipolar with the end of the Cold War, and the two neighbors should now have better relations.

To a question, he justified Pakistan's three-times higher per capita defence expenditures vis-a-vis India as he said that the Indian Army was two and a half times bigger than Pakistan's. Asked about the shaping of the New Delhi-Tehran-Beijing axis in the New World order, Mr. Mirani emphasised that Pakistan enjoyed the best of friendly relations with Iran and China, implying that talk of any new axis would not isolate Pakistan among the littoral states.

Pakistan: Kashmir Issue Settlement Tops Agenda for Talks With India

BK2003092996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Asif's Discourse"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali, who was for a change on a visit to Muzaffarabad

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and adjoining areas along the LoC [Line of Control], has been talking about a wide range of matters related to the Kashmir scenario. He, in particular, rejected the so-called "third option", terming it as "feelers put out by the Indians to misguide the people of Kashmir", and reaffirming commitment to strictly pursue the UN resolutions on Kashmir as the only course for the success of the liberation struggle. The foreign minister has in the recent past been more than once quoted as quite willing to entertain "other proposals on Kashmir", and though he has denied having ever endorsed the "third option" idea, he has somehow been mixed up in the controversy. An explicit statement of intent was, therefore, in place during his visit to Azad Kashmir to reassure the Kashmiris that the Foreign Office in Islamabad was not vulnerable to pressure for accepting "recipes for compromise". Interestingly, Sardar Asif was confronted with questions about Islamabad's "U.S. connection", betraying the apprehension that eagerness to placate the Americans may restrain Pakistan's all-out support to the liberation of Kashmir. "Pakistan is not a pro-U.S. country," he said, "We seek level playing by the U.S. between Pakistan and India." Whether or not the foreign minister's disclaimer of being "pro-U.S." was accepted at face value, his rejection of India's insistence on unconditional talks as "nonsense" was indeed an expression of Islamabad's autonomy in setting the terms for a dialogue with India. We are prepared to talk to India, he said, provided the "exercise is meaningful and result oriented", and not used as a ploy to gain time, making it quite clear that "settlement of the Kashmir question should be on top of any agenda for Pakistan-India talks".

The foreign minister's warning against a second nuclear test by India, which, he said, "will be India's biggest mistake", was called for to put across the message that Pakistan will not be intimidated by show of military power and acquiesce in a peace accord dictated by New Delhi. And his vow not to let India "steal any advantage if Buddha smiles for the second time at Pakistan" was a much needed assurance that Pakistan was ready for a tit-for-tat response to the challenge. While there seems no prospect of India agreeing to a "meaningful dialogue" on Kashmir, Indian Foreign Minister Parnab Mukherjee going to the extent of publicly telling Pakistan to "forget Kashmir", Pakistan has hardly any choice other than sticking to its nuclear programme as a deterrent against New Delhi's military ambition. Unlike India, which is building its war machine, including the nuclear arsenal, to pursue its "great power" ambition, for Pakistan it is a battle for national survival. So long as the core issue of dispute between the two countries is not settled, Pakistan can ill-afford to abdicate the only leverage it has against hegemony and aggression. "Level playing by the U.S. between Pakistan and India" may be a far cry from the American design for the region. Pakistan should no longer be apologetic about its nuclear capability, regardless of how the global power-brokers react to it. Pakistan should clearly spell out its terms for peace and security in the region, refusing to accept any dictation for nuclear non-proliferation unless the Kashmir issue was resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistan: Kabul Charges of Islamabad Financing of Taleban Refuted

BK2003100996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[NNI report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan has refuted the charges of Kabul that Islamabad was involved in financing and equipping the Taleban to lead insecurity in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs further dispelled the impression of President Borhanoddin Rabbani that Pakistan did not like to maintain bilateral and friendly relations with the neighbouring Islamic country.

The spokesman of the Foreign Office while talking to NNI, here Tuesday maintained that there are functional relations with Rabbani regime, however, he stressed that cordial bilateral relations between the two countries could only be maintained if the spirit of civilised norms was in Kabul. The spokesman referring incident of killing of Pakistani diplomats and burning of the diplomatic mission in Kabul, observed that lack of apology and refusal to compensate the losses are enough proves to declare Rabbani regime as uncivilised regime.

Responding a query over the legitimacy of Rabbani government, the spokesman added that in accordance with the Makkah and Peshawar Accords, all the Afghan groups have already termed Rabbani regime as illegitimate. He further added that Rabbani regime has already exhausted its tenure, securing many times extension from "Shura" [consultative council] and further no way is left for Rabbani to remain in power. He, however, reiterated the principle stand of Islamabad that an interim government in the brother Islamic state with the consensus of all the Afghan leaders could only pave the way to start rehabilitation and reconstruction for the people of Afghanistan.

Responding another question, he observed that regarding U.S. for ignoring alleged Pakistani support to any of the Afghan group, was not Islamabad's concern. He, however, stressed that the international community including U.S. Government was well aware over the ef-

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forts of Pakistan to see peace in its neighbouring country.

The spokesman said that Islamabad was fully aware over the troubles of the people of Afghanistan and it is therefore Pakistan is providing maximum facilities to the refugees. When asked whether Pakistan has any plan like Iran to stop renewing the visas and work permit of the Afghan refugees, the Foreign Office maintained that there was no such plan.

Responding to another query over escalated tension on the Working Boundary at Jammu Kashmir and Sialkot Sector, he maintained that Pakistan was in continuous contact with international community in this regard. He stated that UNMOGIP [United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan] was involved in maintaining the situation at the Working Boundary of over thousand kilometres, where India wanted to build fence.

He stated that the international community was informed by the government when India attacked on Forward Kahuta with rockets and through ads and posters in the international media people of the global village were informed over the Indian designs. He maintained that UNMOGIP is doing well and Islamabad did not feel to have for other UN sectors.

Pakistan: Hekmatyar Interviewed on Afghan Situation

BK1903132596 Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 29 Feb 96 pp 12, 13, 15

["Exclusive" interview with Golboddin Hekmatyar, leader of Hezb-e Eslami, Islamic Party, by Sa'ud Sahir, accompanied by correspondents Zafar Mahmud Sheikh and Umar Farooq, in Islamabad on 26 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sahir] Can you tell me why leaders of powerful Afghan political and Jehadi organizations, including yourself, are present in Pakistan these days?

[Hekmatyar] Negotiations are under way among all these parties to form a joint anti-Rabbani alliance in Pakistan. Discussions are being held on this specific issue. All agree that Rabbani's government is illegitimate. We want all opponents of Rabbani to join hands to form a united front against him.

[Sahir] Has there been any progress in this regard?

[Hekmatyar] Yes! Talks are in progress. No final decision has been made yet, but all are agreed on this issue.

[Sahir] You have also met 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, chief of the Jonbesh-e Meli-ye Eslami-ye Afghanistan, after a long time, and it is being said that you have both been able to eliminate your misgivings and complaints against each other. Would you tell me about that?

[Hekmatyar] We did not have any misgivings or complaints against each other, so the question of removing them did not arise at all. The talk about any differences in the Supreme Coordination Council is just a rumor. There is no truth to it. There has been unity in the Supreme Coordination Council thus far. All know that the survival of the Supreme Coordination Council and unity among its constituent parties is necessary for the resolution of the Afghan crisis. This council plays an important role in keeping the Afghan nation united, and all want it to be strengthened.

[Sahir] Reports quoting Mahmoud Mestiri indicate that a new wave of bloodshed is likely to begin in Afghanistan. What is your opinion about this?

[Hekmatyar] The prevailing situation indicates that Mahmoud Mestiri's fears are not unfounded, because the Kabul government is hell-bent on war and is making preparations for it. The Taleban, on the other side, is also ready.

[Sahir] Do you think Pakistan is playing a positive role in the current negotiations among Afghan groups?

[Hekmatyar] We want Pakistan's role to be positive. Islamabad did a lot for us during the time of holy war [against the Soviets]. As a matter of fact, Pakistan's role has always been positive.

[Sahir] What decision has been made on Rabbani's proposal on relinquishing power?

[Hekmatyar] No decision has been made on this issue yet. We have received Professor Rabbani's proposal, but the Supreme Coordination Council has neither discussed it nor set any conditions in this respect. All parties, however, view Rabbani's proposal with suspicion. The problem is not to remove Rabbani from power but to reach a consensus on a system. All will have to agree on a system to resolve the crisis and to set up a durable government in Afghanistan. The problem cannot be resolved merely by changing faces. Under the existing situation in Kabul, even if Mowlawi Khales was brought into power, he would do the same as Rabbani is doing now. The real problem lies in developing a system. So far, the Kabul government has not forwarded any proposal to resolve the crisis.

[Sahir] If Rabbani and Mas'ud are not involved at any stage, how can a consensus be achieved on any system?

[Hekmatyar] It appears from the negotiations held so far that all opposition groups are unanimous in their

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demand that Rabbani hand over power to any neutral interim government, that weapons should be eliminated from Kabul, and elections should be held. Rabbani, on the other hand, is bent on launching an offensive and is sitting on a battle front. The logical conclusion of this will be a war. It now appears that Rabbani is insisting on a war to keep himself in the saddle. He has still not expressed his willingness to enter into negotiations. If the Supreme Coordination Council reaches a consensus on any demand, it would not be possible for the Rabbani government to remain in power. The reason Rabbani is still in power is that the opposition groups have not reached a consensus on any point. If a consensus is reached, it will be impossible for Rabbani to oppose it. Given this situation, the Supreme Coordination Council has no option but to arrive at a consensus.

[Sahir] What would Ahmad Shah Mas'ud do if Rabbani were to resign?

[Hekmatyar] Our intention is not to oust Rabbani or any other person but to change the system so that no one dares oppose it in the future.

[Sahir] If the Supreme Coordination Council arrives at a consensus and makes a final decision, how will that decision be implemented?

[Hekmatyar] We will either ask Rabbani to give up insisting on a war and resign and transfer power, because he cannot fight with all opposition parties simultaneously, or we will invite Rabbani for talks and request Pakistan to again convene a meeting of all Afghan parties in Islamabad to hold peaceful negotiations. We are also ready for that.

[Sahir] Is there any possibility of the opposition groups forming a parallel government to avoid a war with the Rabbani government?

[Hekmatyar] This is also possible, but we have reservations about it. We are not in favor of a parallel government being formed at this juncture. We also do not think that the parallel government will help resolve the problem.

[Sahir] What are your reservations about a parallel government?

[Hekmatyar] The formation of a parallel government might lead to the division of Afghanistan. We want a single government in Afghanistan, which should be based in Kabul. That is why we are not in favor of a parallel government.

[Sahir] How do you view the role of the Iranian Government?

[Hekmatyar] Iran's stand is quite clear. They openly say that Rabbani's is a legitimate government and that is why they support and recognize it. Both Russia and Iran are supporting the Rabbani government.

[Sahir] The stand of the Supreme Coordination Council and the Pakistani Government is that Rabbani's government is illegal, while Iran's stand is totally opposite. In view of this, serious resentment is found against Iran. Some unpleasant incidents have also taken place in areas adjoining the Iranian border. What are the probabilities in this context? Is Iran in a position to play any role in the solution of this problem?

[Hekmatyar] Iran is very actively striving to find a solution to the problem, but its efforts have not proved effective thus far. You know the reasons for this. Positive results could have emerged had the Iranians tried to help resolve the dispute impartially, but they have remained totally ineffective so far.

[Sahir] You met recently with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ala'eddin Borujerdi, who is very active in this regard. Did he offer you any proposals for the resolution of the crisis?

[Hekmatyar] He only said that the Rabbani government is legal. He also called for negotiations with Rabbani to find a solution to the problem.

[Sahir] How do you view the Rabbani government's relationship with India, which is a cause of concern for both the government and the people of Pakistan?

[Hekmatyar] There is no doubt that Kabul has close contacts with India, which is supporting Rabbani. India is very actively influencing Afghan affairs. India is creating problems for both Pakistan and Afghan opposition parties. It is regrettable that the Kabul government has established close relations with India, which sided with the Soviets and opposed the mojahedin during the holy war. Rabbani has also forged an alliance with the communists, who have old ties with India and who made Rabbani tilt toward New Delhi. Now Rabbani relies on India and seeks assistance from New Delhi.

[Sahir] What are your party's proposals for resolving the Afghan tangle?

[Hekmatyar] We have offered two proposals. First, Rabbani should resign and transfer power to an interim caretaker government, which should be followed by elections. If the Rabbani government does not accept this, our second proposal is that all anti-Rabbani government parties should form a united front.

[Sahir] Fear that the Afghan civil war might spill into Pakistan is evident in this country. Is there any basis for this fear?

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[Hekmatyar] There is no doubt that the nations that caused a civil war in Afghanistan do not want to see peace in this region. They want instability in this region. These forces also want to cause enormous harm to Pakistan through Afghanistan. You know what Indian ambitions are. History is a witness that it has caused problems for Pakistan whenever there has been a pro-India government in Kabul. There is little likelihood, however, of the Afghan civil war spilling into Pakistan. It is a well-known fact that the entire region will be affected if Afghanistan is affected.

[Sahir] The Pakistani Foreign Office does not appear to be playing any role in the current negotiations among Afghan parties. Why?

[Hekmatyar] When we come to Pakistan, the entire country happens to be on our side.

[Sahir] Can you say how much longer it will take for peace to settle in Afghanistan?

[Hekmatyar] It is not possible to fix a timetable because peace cannot be established there as long as the interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs continues. That is why external interference must be stopped.

[Sahir] The same thing is being said by Rabbani, but in a slightly different vein. Rabbani's stand is that Pakistan is interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs. He has also written to the UN secretary general about this. What is your opinion?

[Hekmatyar] It is true that Rabbani is leveling these allegations, but the entire Afghan nation knows who is interfering in their country. It is Russia and its caliphs who are interfering in Afghanistan. This interference will continue increasing if Rabbani does not resign.

[Sahir] Is Iran also one of Russia's caliphs?

[Hekmatyar] The countries that support Rabbani's government and recognize it as a legitimate government are actually working for Russia.

[Sahir] Is the allegation correct that Iran is enhancing the process of Afghanistan's division along ethnic lines?

[Hekmatyar] As far as the question of Afghanistan's division along ethnic lines is concerned, it will harm Iran the most. Should Afghanistan be divided, God forbid, along these lines, Iran would also not escape a division because similar conditions prevail in that country as well. I do not think Iran has any axe to grind in this regard. I hope Tehran will not commit such a mistake.

[Sahir] Despite the defeat of the former Soviet Union at the hands of Afghanistan, the continued civil war in the country has led the world to believe that Afghanistan has lost the fruits of the holy war. Is it true?

[Hekmatyar] The truth is that the Islamic movement has not yet come to a successful conclusion. Afghanistan is still not fully independent because the communists still share power in Kabul. Many other powers also do not want to see Afghanistan become fully independent, because they know that once the experiment of jehad reaches a successful conclusion in Afghanistan, other nations may as well try to use this experiment to achieve freedom. That is why they are all jointly hatching conspiracies against Afghanistan and are placing obstacles in our way. We fully understand the anti- Afghanistan conspiracies being hatched at the international level. The same thing is happening in other parts of the world, like in Bosnia, Palestine, Chechnya, and Algeria. Kashmir is also an example of this conspiracy.

[Sahir] You said that even if Yunes Khales were to come to power, he would do the same thing as Rabbani is doing now. Why?

[Hekmatyar] What I meant by this is that, under the present circumstances, any person brought in to replace Rabbani will not be able to do anything. The only option is that we should all jointly find a formula to resolve the crisis.

[Sahir] Several agreements, like the Peshawar accord, Islamabad accord, were signed in the past, but they could not be implemented. Why?

[Hekmatyar] We tried our best to implement the agreements, but I was not allowed to enter Kabul when I went to Kabul to take over the charge of the prime ministership under the Islamabad accord.

[Sahir] Rabbani had also come to power in accordance with the Islamabad agreement. Why did he renege on his commitment? How can a new agreement help resolve the crisis?

[Hekmatyar] We are optimistic about it because all sides have already tested all other means — conspiracies, dependence on other's assistance — and have now begun to understand that by utilizing those means they can neither gain power nor sustain it. If all happen to agree on an interim system, the problem can be resolved.

[Sahir] Rabbani will accept it [interim system] only when Iran and Russia are ready to do that. How will the Kabul regime be ousted given this situation?

[Hekmatyar] For this very reason, I say that whatever decision is made, it should be made unanimously and unitedly, so that Rabbani will be forced to accept it.

[Sahir] One impression is that nothing concrete is happening in the negotiations the Afghan leaders are currently holding in Islamabad. Do you agree?

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[Hekmatyar] Something is definitely happening. My very presence here indicates that something is happening.

[Sahir] Is not the purpose of bringing you all to Islamabad different?

[Hekmatyar] The purpose may be different, but something is still happening.

[Sahir] One impression is that the Islamabad meeting has been convened to save certain weak anti-Rabbani parties — the constituents of the Supreme Coordination Council — from breaking up. Is this correct?

[Hekmatyar] Yes, but if some organs of the body are weak, something needs to be done to protect them from becoming diseased.

[Sahir] Did Rabbani approach you through Sayyaf?

[Hekmatyar] Kabul approached everyone, but it was not sincere in its overtures. No clear-cut proposal that could help in resolving the problem has been received from Kabul thus far. There has been no agreement between Kabul and me. Rabbani has spread such rumors to create differences among the opposition and to buy as much time as possible. Any agreement between me and Kabul could not have been kept a secret, because it would not have been a minor development.

[Sahir] Do you rule out the possibility of more civil war in Afghanistan?

[Hekmatyar] There is no civil war. War preparations are being made in Kabul. There may be fighting in provinces located in western Afghanistan, because war preparations are also under way in that region. Fighting will continue as long as the current regime remains in Kabul.

[Sahir] Recently, the Taleban militia enforced Islamic law in the Khowst region and punished some people according to that law to give the impression that the fruits of the holy war have not gone to waste. Is this true?

[Hekmatyar] Some people think Islam means retribution, cutting off [a thief's] hand and other forms of punishment. Islam, however, does not mean only that; it is an all-encompassing doctrine of life. Punishment is its last resort and not a primary objective. The other thing is that the people are not able to see the changes that have occurred in the Afghan nation as a result of the holy war. A revolution has taken place in the Afghan nation as a whole. An awareness about Islam and the Islamic system has emerged in the entire nation. The ground has been paved. We are very optimistic about it, because a new generation has emerged in Afghanistan that is ready to sacrifice everything for Islam. They want only an Islamic system and will not accept anything else. The Islamic law enforced by Taleban in some provinces of Afghanistan cannot be said to be a unique achievement by that group. These Islamic laws are, in fact, a few of the fruits of the holy war, which are now visible to you. Let an Islamic government be formed in Kabul, and then you will see what the real fruits of a holy war are and what a revolution means.

[Sahir] During the period of the Afghan holy war, a good impression of the Afghan leaders emerged in the entire world, including Pakistan, but the current civil war in the country has affected that image. What do you think?

[Hekmatyar] The thing that the enemy dreads is a Muslim nation that is devoid of leadership. It is the Western media that conceives and molds our leadership. Whenever a real leader emerges on the horizon, the West hatches a conspiracy to eliminate him, considering the one who might take over the leadership of the entire Islamic community to be the biggest threat.

It is regrettable that the leaders of the Islamic states are not produced by the Islamic countries themselves, but they are created by our enemies — the BBC and the Voice of America. They project and herald the persons of their choice as heroes; and if these heroes turn against anyone one of them, they are eliminated. How regrettable it is that just by using their radios, our enemies become the cause of revolutions and incidents in our own regions! It is unfortunate for the entire Islamic community. We want our community to overcome this problem.

Pakistan: Nasrullah—U.S. Wants Kashmir Trusteeship To Counter China

BK2003085096 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 20 Mar 96 p 12

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The U.S. wants Kashmir under its trusteeship to counter China.

This was stated by veteran politician and chairman parliamentary committee on Kashmir Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan while speaking at a literary reference in memory of late Maulana Kausar Niazi here on Tuesday.

The function was also addressed by three ministers, Muhammad Afzal Khan, ministr for Kashmir Affairs; Dr Sher Afghan Niazi, minister for special education; Makhdoom Shahabuddin, minister of state for finance; PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Senator Malik Hakmeen Khan; opposition's Senators Maulana Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi and Maulana Samiul Haq, Maulana Kausar

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Niazi's son Dr Rauf Niazi; journalist Zahid Malik; and scholars Maulana Abdul Qadeer Khamosh, Maulana Ziaul Qasmi, Dr Sibte Hassan Rizvi, Sh Mansoor of Bohra Jamaat, and Sahibzada Saeedur Rashid Abbasi.

Nasrullah said after the break-up of USSR, Islamic bloc was the next target of U.S.A. He condemned the U.S. for stopping arms supply to Pakistan because of suspicion that Pakistan and China had violated U.S. non-proliferation laws through alleged transfer of ring magnets from China to Pakistan. He said that Pakistan did not get any sensitive nuclear equipment from China. Therefore, he said, stopping 368 million U.S. dollars arms supply to Pakistan was highly unjust and deplorable.

He said U.S. should return our money or deliver the military equipments. He said Pakistan had paid U.S. for F-16 plane. But what a pity that it had refused even to pay back our money.

He accused U.S. of adopting double standards by punishing Pakistan on nuclear issue but ignoring India which had exploded a nuclear device in 1974. "President Clinton has openly asked India not to conduct another nuclear test and refrain from deploying Prithvi missiles. But contrary to his warning, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had said that India will conduct second nuclear test and that India had also deployed missiles", he added.

He said the U.S. did not object to the deployment of 600,000 Indian troops in occupied Kashmir. On the other hand, the Americans have hired people who plead that Kashmir should be given in the trusteeship of the United Nations. Nawabzada said American game was to get Kashmir under the U.S. trusteeship to counter China.

He stressed the need for evolving unity to foil the Americans conspiracy against Islamic bloc and Pakistan. He asked the opposition and the government to join hands for promotion of national unity.

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